

HELPING HANDS

**60 Years Of
Facilitating Social Justice in Wellington**

**A History Of The Wellington Council of Social Services
(Welcoss) 1952-2012**

By

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Disclaimer:

This history has been compiled from records and documents including meeting minutes etc held by Welcoss spanning the 60 years between 1952 and 2012. This history also includes the outcome from several interviews with surviving Chairpersons and Welcoss life members including abstracts of taped interviews done by Ms Maria Phelan in 1999 and 2000 respectively with two former Chairpersons: Mr Wally Lake and Mrs Norma Taylor. Comments and views of the current Chair, Jocelyn Francis O'Kane were also sought and incorporated.

Parts of the history contain some subjective comment of my own. These reflect only the opinions and views of the writer and should in no way be taken to stand for the opinions and views of anyone who has been associated with Welcoss either now or in the past.

CONTENTS

| Preface | Page |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1: 1952-53: Crossing the Start Line | 1 |
| 2. 1953-60: Gathering Momentum | 8 |
| 3. 1961-70: Reaching Out in a Decade of Turbulence | 17 |
| 4. 1971-80: New Name, New Role, New Structures | 29 |
| 5. 1981-90: Springbok Rugby Tour, Freedom of Information Act, the NZ Party, Rogernomics, Deregulation, Yuppies & All that Jazz | 50 |
| 6. 1991-00: Mother of All Battles Verses the Mother of All Budgets, MMP, NZ First, & the Fall of Apartheid & the Berlin Wall | 76 |
| 7. 2000-12: When Planes Fell, Buildings Leaked, Banks Failed, the Earth Moved, & “The Cup” Came Home | 97 |
| 8. 2011-2013: Addendum | 122 |
| 9. Conclusion: The End of the Beginning, so Where to From Here? | 129 |
| 9. About the Writer | 133 |
| 10. Appendices | |

PREFACE

The background to the Wellington Council of Social Services or Welcoss needs to be seen as fully synonymous with any broader based social history of Wellington City. As such, its recorded work and records, including this history, would provide additional and hopefully useful resource to any broader research into the city's social history. Welcoss had its tentative but enthusiastic beginnings as the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC) in 1952. It was formed to raise the awareness of, and assisting in addressing, various social issues of the city's residents. These included coordinating welfare provision and particularly a supplementary grants scheme. The concept appeared to be the brainchild of the then Social Security Department. At the very least the Department took an initial leading role and played a prominent part in the Committee's work for over 20 years.

From its founding and to this very day, Welcoss (incorporated as such from 1974) has been a vigorous and vociferous sounding board for, and champion to, some 150 or more Wellington community and social service groups. Most of these are not for profit organisations relying on a combination of central and local government, business and community funding sources to deliver their services.

Over the 60 years of its lifetime Welcoss has exposed, raised, and worked to alleviate major social issues which have dogged not only Wellington but a nation wide constituency. Tragically many of these issues have tended to stay constant. In the 1950s the plight of fatherless families as a result of the recently concluded world wide conflict together with an attendant lack of family income and supporting the city's senior citizens topped the list of social needs facing the new Committee. But, despite the Labour led reforms of the 1930s and 40s, general health and well being needs including children's general health, poverty, lack of access to quality housing, homelessness, unemployment, and alcohol abuse still bubbled. The participation of the Wellington Branch of the Society for the Protection of Women & Children on the Committee also indicated that domestic violence too was as much a factor of the 1950s as later in the century.

By 1952 the strength of the social reforms of the First Labour Government that had captured the attention and admiration of the world was dissipating. Time and changing economic and social circumstances were key factors in this trend. Others were increased rates and adverse impacts of these changes. Trends today such as: increased national debt; decreases in manual labour needs, rapid technology growth; ongoing urbanisation and rural depopulation; rises in the cost of food, education, and health care; a recent trend for central government to leave more and more social support to the voluntary and private sectors; an ongoing and seemingly never ending struggle to achieve adequate social housing delivery; problems with refugee families accessing basic social services; rising mental health issues; insufficient funding support for voluntary agencies having to take on more and more workload; increasing multiculturalism; ongoing unemployment including among new university graduates; lengthening food bank queues as more and more families struggle to make ends meet; child poverty (estimated up to 200,000 by mid 2013); abuse of the elderly by their older children who either were unable to afford to live away from home or were living at home to care for their parents; alcohol and drug problems including freely available new legal highs emerged over the 60 years the Wellington Council of Social Services (Welcoss) has been in existence under its several titles . It is likely they will remain a work in progress for some time to come.

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Thus groups such as Welcoss and its parent, the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS) are likely, therefore, to be also around for some time yet.

Sixty years on the expression which comes to mind is “nothing changes.”

From research into this history it was interesting to note that today's Welcoss Executive is a broader representation of the city's community and social service network than that of the Wellington District Welfare Committee and the Wellington Social Services Council that it finally superseded in 1974. Key central agencies and local divisions of national bodies, led by the former Department of Social Security, appeared to be the dominant partners in those early years. Organisations such as the Maori Affairs Department; the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army Churches; St John's, the Returned Serviceman's Association (RSA), NZ Crippled Children's Society, YWCA, the Wellington Hospital Board and Red Cross filled the seats around the first Wellington District Welfare Committee meeting table.

Today it can be a difficult exercise to attract active participation of, or even achieve valid responses by, some central government agencies in Welcoss work. As such, the level of direct collaboration on major projects of both regional and even national issues between the Social Security and Health Department head offices in particular and the Wellington District Welfare Committee can only be looked on with the greatest of envy by today's Welcoss. Much of central government and other national body participation such as WINZ, the Ministry of Social Development, Housing New Zealand, the Education Department, Te Puni Kokiri (the former Maori Affairs Department), the RSA and even some Church representation is minimal at best and usually not at all. Disappeared too are a number of former member groups which have gone out of existence altogether.

After agreeing at the inaugural meeting to continue with the Wellington District Welfare Committee concept the word went out to local community welfare groups to apply for membership. Some at least, the Wellington Branch of the Nurses Association being one, were turned away with the reason politely but firmly given that others invitees could effectively represent their sector's interest. Under today's more inclusive approach, any wider Network member may nominate representation to the Executive's annual general meeting. The Network too afford an effective conduit to both the Welcoss Executive and City Council tables.

The first 60 years of Welcoss was grandly and worthily celebrated in the Wellington City Council Chambers in September 2012. However, the matter of further celebrations in another 60 years or 40 for the centenary or again even a short 15 years for the organisation's 75th celebrations remains a more uncertain one. For one, over 2012 and 2013 there was review into a possible merging of regional local authorities into a “super city” concept. This would signal both positive and negative impacts covering expansion to demise. So too would any perception that perhaps Welcoss had become less relevant or sufficiently robust to continue supporting. There remains one certainty in life and that is change. The current Welcoss Chair, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, rightly noted this in her item for the final Welcoss newsletter of 2012. In it she wrote that proposed local government structure options for the Wellington region did not necessarily bode well for the future existence of Welcoss in the longer term.

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She wrote that while Welcoss was fortunate to have the support and confidence of the Wellington City Council and with Council funding assured until June 2015 the landscape is likely to be very different from that point. Jocelyn Frances O'Kane stated that while the Wellington City Council currently appreciated the contribution that an umbrella group like Welcoss makes, including active participation in Council projects, a bigger local government body may not share that same view.

The previous month the Chair also pointed to real and ongoing funding cuts to community social sector participants and changes to current charity allocation policies. As such she said that Welcoss' survival depended on the need to work smarter. Particularly in bringing central government back to the table again with local government and the sector to facilitate getting the most of any opportunities for community and social support services in future years.

The strong support of the Wellington City Council and commitment to firstly the Wellington District Welfare Committee then the Wellington Social Services Council and subsequently Welcoss over the last 60 years has been rightly remarked upon by a number of past Chairs of the organisation. For their part, both the WDWC, WSSC and Welcoss have earned a significant tick in the box marked "value for money." If a more limited value had been the outcome for both the Council or local community and social support service groups the concept would have been binned years ago.

Whatever the outcome of any formal local government structural review it is unlikely that social support service needs in Wellington will disappear. Particularly if considering the above list of social issues the city and region will face in the years to come. Indeed it is not beyond the laws of probability that these same issues may even worsen. By its 60th anniversary, Welcoss was a key partner in major Wellington City Council initiatives to develop strategies to assist growing numbers of homeless people and steer the way to affordable social housing solutions. Yet another Council project in which Welcoss was an active participant, and indeed partner in, at the time involved a social mapping exercise. Another cause that Welcoss adopted near its anniversary celebrations was as a key activist for a "casino free Wellington."

The above initiatives and its past record in activating for, and realising, a Wellington Senior Club, a night shelter in Wellington, advocacy for and input into the first ever New Zealand standards for rest homes for the elderly, a new civil defence structure, centralised accommodation and support services for Wellington's community and social service groups, Wellington's first ever Social Services and Welfare Directory, a Volunteer Bureau, applying social planning concepts to new suburban infrastructure development, home help advocacy, lobbying hard for an inner city creche and a women's boarding house, and many, many more successes should stand it in good stead when local government bean counting is done as to what will remain and what will go. Welcoss' future prospects and role, should it be continue to be supported by whatever local government structure evolves for Wellington City and/or the region, will be raised again in the concluding chapter. For now the emphasis will be back in time.

Crossing the Start Line: 1952-53

1952:

Time: 10.30 am
Date: 18 November 1952
Place: Social Security Department, Wellington
What: The inaugural meeting of the Wellington District Welfare Committee
Chairman: Mr H. S. Cross (elected at the start of the meeting).
Attendees: (Taken from the minutes which had all first names and initials for some attendees not recorded):

Mr H.S. (Syd) Cross (Presbyterian Social Services); Mr Bailey & Miss Wallace (Patriotic Welfare Committee); Mr J. Collins (St John Ambulance Association); Rev. H. Squires (Wellington City Mission); Rev. Goodman (Methodist Church); Father O'Neil (Catholic Church); Dr Kennedy (Medical Officer of Health); Mrs Souper (Crippled Children's Society); Mrs E. Coleridge (Mother's Helpers Society); Mrs Williamson (YWCA); Mr Barrett (Maori Welfare Officer); Miss Lissington (The Blind Institute); Mr Howitt (Heritage Inc); Messrs Griffiths & Young (Wellington branch of the RSA); Miss Wells & Miss Bonner (Red Cross); Mrs Muir (Mayor's Relief Fund & Smith Family Joyspreaders Inc); Mr Clark (Wellington Hospital Board and Wellington Elderly Folks Council); Senior Major Wilkes (Salvation Army); Mr J. Ferguson & Miss Hindle (Child Welfare Division of the Department of Social Security); Mr L. McKinnon (Registrar of Social Security); Mr J. Kenward (Social Security Department Head Office); Mr W.R. A. Lake (Social Assistance Officer, Social Security department, Tory Street office).

Also in Attendance:

Mr R. A. Fernandez, Assistant Registrar of the Social Security Department; Mr E. C. Puddick, Divisional Officer (Social Security Department).

Such are the bare facts underpinning the first ever meeting of the Wellington District Welfare Committee. Its purpose was to gauge the level of interest in the concept and if so confirm its continuance. It was a concept championed by the Social Security Department as one whose time had come. Already a similar group operated in Auckland City. The focus of the new Committee was to assist Wellington divisions of central government agencies and the Wellington City Council co-ordinate welfare provision and assistance. Early suggestions supported providing advice to the Social Security Department. There was also a distinct element of control. Some evidence was to hand that welfare applicants were duplicating approaches to various funds. "Double dipping" this became known as and was a term which lasted for some considerable years in the welfare sector. A central register of all the new Committee members' various sources of funds and their cases was proposed (and agreed) at the second meeting of the new Committee to reduce, if not eliminate, duplicate applications for assistance. In this the Department of Social Security took a central sponsoring role. It was one repeated in subsequent years.

That such a Committee was needed just at this time may at first appear puzzling. The 1950s and 1960s were boom times for the national economy.

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The British Empire dominated the maps of the world and were buyers of our agriculture and forestry products. This was no better symbolised in that period than the oft held sight of a Wellington Harbour jam packed with cargo ships. As well, while there was some unemployment there were plenty of both skilled and labour intensive jobs available.

With the end of the Second World War the country's focus once again fell on production of export resources (agriculture and timber) and major infrastructure development. In particular this related to the provision of sealed roads, state housing, and electricity supply. Farms, orchards and market garden expansion needed waged labour. Trade apprenticeships were also plentiful for school leavers who wanted them.

Urban expansion and a new wave of state tenants required more construction companies and building firms. As well, the demand for and gradual supply of new farm machinery and family vehicles boosted the number of mechanic and panel beater job opportunities. The Works and Post & telegraph Departments Department and government railway workshops also provided an ongoing source of a skilled workforce. Many avenues of employment provided jobs for life and there were plenty of those going into the workforce throughout the workforce who did just that. Lastly the gap between the most wealthy and the poorest off was somewhat narrower than today. Rationing became gradually a thing of the past while food and other items previously in short supply were returning to retailers' shelves.

But not all was completely well in "God's own paradise."

Of particular focus for the new Committee (whose continuation was yet to be resolved) were the needs of the elderly, children, and families adversely affected still by the Second World War. While this world wide event had concluded some seven years previously its impact on numbers of Wellington families remained. Some families were still trying to make do without fathers and sons and the adverse social impacts which resulted. Also there were plenty of examples of families whose fathers and sons had returned home maimed, wounded or shell shocked and unable to contribute to family incomes. As well they placed the health care system under considerable pressure. Qualified social workers were also in short supply and their numbers were sorely stretched with extensive caseloads.

The involvement of the New Zealand Returned Services Association (RSA) in initial meetings of the Committee was a testament to the need to adequately support families still affected by war.

1952 had also seen some two years of the first jet age conflict, the Korean War. As a result more families impacted by armed conflict loomed. Also, previous years of Labour led moderate socialism had been replaced in 1951 by a more conservative government under the leadership of Sydney Holland. Wellington's streets had already echoed to a major national waterfront strike. It was an event which was underpinned by open violence at times and had been settled by a rather heavy handed government response. As a result, resentment and suspicion of all parties (the Government and employers on the one hand and trade unions and their members on the other) was to last decades.

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The migration of large numbers of Maori into the larger urban centres was also on the increase. More than a few culture, social and economic shocks were some of the outcomes. The requirements of these new urban citizens required effective management and the need to ensure access to proper support including work, housing, health care, education and welfare assistance.

Tuberculosis remained rife. The 1950s also saw a wave of polio afflict urban and rural communities alike. These added to the already strained public health resources. At least until effective inoculations for the latter became readily available from the end of the decade.

Thus it was with this background that the Social Security Department's Registrar, Mr McKinnon brought the very first gathering of the Wellington District Welfare Committee (henceforth to be referred in these pages as the WDWC or the new Committee) to order. Prior to the important business of electing the first Chairperson he explained their role pending agreement to establish the Committee on an ongoing basis. The perceived role included assessing any impact of the Special Assistance Fund on the organisations of those represented. As well, he looked towards the members of the Committee working together to better coordinate the government and city's efforts in welfare provision and support.

On his election, the new Chairman, Mr Syd Cross, sought the cooperation of the membership in ensuring that they all got to know the full range of welfare assistance providers in the city. A central registrar of funds and case loads was mooted. This was promoted to underpin the need to reduce any overlapping of their functions and funds for distribution. And to make the available funds and grants go further. As part and parcel of this approach Mr Cross also sought the Committee's help in assisting him in administering the Special Assistance Fund. He hoped this fund might well be able to take over the obligations of some of the other member organisations. This was especially in order to relieve them of any long term cases.

Other business saw a sub committee suggested to advise the Registrar of the Social Security Department on specific cases in and around the city. It was then suggested that with such a sub Committee perhaps full meetings of the full Committee might be needed less frequently. The roles of both the full Committee and the sub-committee to advise the Department of Social Security were then affirmed. Getting nominations for the full Committee from other Wellington welfare providers were also agreed to. Although these were to represent organisations and not individuals. Also excluded was the Hutt Valley region with the Committee's focus to remain within Wellington City.

The question on providing paid domestic assistance (home help) to needy families in lieu of, or as well as, financial assistance was then raised and gained the support of the meeting. It was agreed to in principle but left pending confirmation of the extent of the need and availability of potential employees. The concept of identifying specific cases and then providing domestic assistance from available government special assistance and relief funding was a clear indication of the new Committee's desire to intervene directly in helping needy families and individuals. These included widows and the elderly with final decisions to be made by an appropriate government agency on a case by case basis.

7.

The first tentative steps of what was to evolve into Welcoss had been taken. There was one further meeting for the year scheduled for 9 December (later rescheduled). In the interim, central government increased its representation with a nomination from the Education Department. In addition other nominations came from the Society for the Protection of Women & Children, the Wellington Tuberculosis Association, the Patriotic Welfare Committee, and the Vocational Guidance Centre.

The last meeting of the year also agreed to consider further nominations on their merits if, and as, these were received. Membership was not entirely open, however. The Wellington Branch of the Nurses Association was one group keen to sign on. But their application was initially turned down. They were informed that as the Wellington Hospital Board was already a Committee member that body would be able to represent the Association's interests and concerns.

The December meeting was largely a continuation of November business. The Committee confirmed a number of positions adopted at the first meeting. Mr Cross was again elected to the Chair with Mr C. Meacham from St John's Ambulance accepting the deputy's role. The Committee's prime co-ordinating role was also confirmed with a five person previously agreed sub-committee to advise the Social Security Department. It comprised Miss Lissington (Blind Institute); Mrs Muir (Mayor's Relief Fund); Mr Ferguson (Child Welfare Division of the Social Security Department); Mr Clark (Child Welfare Division of the Hospital Board); and Mrs Dive (Society for the Protection of Women & Children). The Chairman, Deputy Chairman and two Social Security Department officers (Messrs McKinnon and Lake) were appointed ex-officio to the sub-Committee.

A central register of Wellington based welfare providers and agencies, their funding sources and amounts and case loads was one of the more noteworthy outcomes of the December business. The register was to be kept up to date and retained within the Department of Social Welfare.

Of interest was the RSA's and Heritage Inc's decisions to decline being represented on the register. The reasons why, if discussed, would have proved interesting reading as the minutes did not reflect these. A fear of central government intervention (read that as interference) may or may not have been an issue in the decisions of the two organisations. Early the next year the RSA was informed that as it would not be contributing to the central register the organisation could not be represented at future WDWC meetings. An olive branch was on offer, however, urging the organisation to reconsider. On the whole, responses from those organisations which did hold funds to assist needy families were supportive. A number of Committee members represented groups which did not give direct financial aid and these were noted.

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1952-60

GATHERING MOMENTUM

Background:

There was a steady expansion of the new Wellington District Welfare Committee's (WDWC's) roles over the next eight years. First under the leadership of Mr Syd Cross and then Mrs H.D. Muir. The expansion evolved against a backdrop of significant international and national, social, and cultural changes. The end of the United Nations (UN) "police action" in Korea was coming to its slow end against a background of protracted peace negotiations. Even so troops on both sides of the conflict continued to push for an advantage along the 38th parallel resulting in inevitable and additional casualties.

Despondency at the growing casualty lists evaporated at the news that New Zealand mountaineer, Edmund (later Sir Edmund) Hillary and his Nepalese guide Sherpa Tensing were the first to survey the curve of the earth from the top of Mount Everest. The nation was understandably euphoric and celebrations lasted some considerable time. At least until the country's worst train disaster on Christmas Eve 1953. The crash occurred at Tangiwai, near Ohakune, on the North Island's central plateau. It sent New Zealanders into deep mourning and took the gloss off the first tour to this country of Queen Elizabeth 11 and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1953 music enthusiasts continued to sing along with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney and Patty Paige. They also danced to the Glen Miller orchestra. Music, was, however, in line for a huge shakeup in the middle of the decade. Then Elvis Presley, Bill Haley and his Comets, the Platters, Little Richard, Fats Domino, Carl Perkins and others introduced the phenomenon of rock'n roll. Kids flocked to the sound of electric guitars and saxophones which replaced piano and button accordians, string bass's and pianos in local dance halls. Parents were shocked and many lost interest in the popular music of the day. The six o'clock swill spilled hundreds onto the streets between six and 6.30pm to send after work drinkers homeward. Licensing hours were strict. Not even the defeat of the touring Springbok test rugby team 3-1 in 1956 (the first time the visitors had been beaten in a test series in 60 years) was sufficient to ensure even a temporary relaxation of these rules to allow grander celebrations.

1956 was a big year for sport. In addition to the series victory over the South African Springboks, our own Norman Read took the long distance walking gold medal in the Melbourne Olympics while New Zealand won its first ever cricket test. This was against the West Indies at Auckland's Eden Park in March. The win was a great comeback from the previous season when New Zealand held (and still does) the dubious honour of scoring the lowest ever test score. Twenty-six against Len Hutton's English side.

In New Zealand homes, vehicles and belongings could still be left unlocked when unattended. However, the huge public interest garnered by the Remuera machine gun murders and the Parker & Hulme murder trial brought a shadow over our faith that we lived in a society largely free of the very worst of violent crime.

The nation also gained great comfort from its entrenched position within the bosom of the British Empire as “cold war” tensions increased under the umbrella of efforts to develop, test and accumulate weapons of mass destruction. Often such testing was conducted not too far away from our own shores. Even so our beloved “Empire” was undergoing a major transition towards a Commonwealth status of truly autonomously independent nations. This had began first in India in the 1940s and was continuing in Africa. However the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), of which New Zealand was a key member, and ANZUS (Australia New Zealand and the United States) seemed to assure us a safe protective cover.

The coldest of the cold war years involved huge British built V bombers and their United States B52s flying several miles above the Earth 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They were ready at any moment to deliver their lethal nuclear payloads at the push of a button.

American Chevrolets, Dodges and de-Sotos, many of them pre war, predominated on our roads. However, the new shaped, long booted Chevrolet soon became one of the more common cars on the country's highways for a while from 1952. And despite the first jet propelled combat taking place in above Korea, it was the hardy propeller driven DC3s that New Zealanders were more familiar with in the skies overhead.

1952-60: Summary

The needs of the elderly formed an ever increasing volume of work for the new Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC). By the end of the decade such was the extent of the needs of Wellington's elderly that a special sub-committee was formed from a growing WDWC membership to consider, report on and seek solutions towards improving their lot. Initially the perception of elderly needs revolved around finance. Subsequent WDWC investigations added loneliness and sub standard accommodation to the list.

There was some early misconception as to the new organisation's role following initial press coverage of the its launch. Especially once it began receiving numerous requests for direct financial assistance. Something the group was certainly not there to provide.

In addressing the needs of Wellington's elderly the WDWC worked and liaised with the Health Department's Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged. This liaison included providing the Advisory Committee with research data on the availability of clubs and housing accommodation. The WDWC had recommended that central government authorities seriously consider the concept of village type housing for the elderly. It also provided valuable input into the eventual drafting of regulations and standards of care in rest homes. The Committee experienced some considerable frustration with the time taken to eventually get the said regulations passed. Members had to wait until well into the next decade to see their efforts on this front realised.

One direct outcome of WDWC efforts was the establishment of the Wellington Senior Club. Some 26,000 pounds (about \$52,000 in value then) was raised for the project. When it finally opened in the following decade it operated under the umbrella of the WDWC first under the chairmanship of Wally Lake and then Mrs H. D. Muir. Later the Club went it alone. Yet another outstanding success story was the printing and regularly updating of the Wellington Directory of Social Service and Welfare Organisations. The first issue was sold to WDWC members at one pound (\$2) per organisation while regular reprints continued over several decades.

During its early years senior social security and health officials, and even Cabinet Ministers, were readily accessible to the new Committee. Various Ministers of Health and Social Security were regular annual meeting speakers. So too were senior central and local government officials. Even mayors on occasion. This relationship with central government was fostered by one of the Committee's core roles to review Social Security Department Special Assistance Fund grant decisions. Yet another factor was through the administration support given the Committee by the Social Security Department.

By the end of the decade the word had spread and membership applications grew in volume and pace. The Committee had to shift premises at least twice to accommodate the increasing membership at its meetings. So did the volume and range of issues referred to it. By 1960 the Committee was already considering the plight of mental health patients and former patients. In addition, its mounting renown had the Committee receiving more and more central government reports and policy drafts for its consideration and advice.

1952-60: The Decade in Detail

As the new Committee took root in the Wellington environment more and more issues were referred to it. These included pleas for direct financial assistance and were usually referred on to possible sources of funds. Thus momentum began to build. Particularly so following the publication of the Chairman's extensive press statement to the Dominion newspaper in June 1953. This encompassed the Committee's view on the various needs of Wellington's elderly and how these could be best met. The statement also outlined the objectives of the WDWC, its resources, and its membership. The statement was released by the Chairman, Mr H. (Syd) Cross, in order to clarify and correct what Committee members believed had been a number of unsubstantiated opinions on the plight of the elderly which had been already publicised by the Dominion newspaper. It was the strongest attempt to date by the Committee to establish its credentials with the greater Wellington public.

In the release (following a summary of the Committee's inception, role, and membership) Mr Cross reported that considerable intelligence had already been gathered by various Committee members in regard to the needs of Wellington's elderly. This included bringing individual cases of need to the Committee which were referred to one or other of various welfare funding providers for assistance including applications for additional benefits. As well, the statement advised that Committee members had been guided in their endeavours by recent research provided by the Department of Health. Mr Cross was concerned that the problems of Wellington's aged were not financial alone. He put forward accommodation and loneliness in particular as yet additional issues which needed addressing. In his press statement Mr Cross advised that many elderly people chose to live in sub standard housing or boarding facilities. He also outlined various types of aid already being provided such as home help, meals and visits from social workers to the elderly in their places of residence. The statement concluded with a plea for offers from the community including those willing to take on home visits and providing information on the availability of good accommodation at fair rentals.

Efforts to raise the standards of living for elderly people within Wellington continued to dominate Committee attention over the remainder of the decade. And, as at mid point through the year 2013, it still did. The intervening years had also seen an extension to homeless and needy families generally. Public attention on the needs of Wellington's elderly was further highlighted in 1955 with a national conference. At this WDWC personnel were active participants. Later the organisation was thanked for the Committee's input by the organisers, the Department of Health. An Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged was a key outcome of the conference and operated under the auspices of the Health Department. A regular, direct and ongoing relationship then ensued between the Advisory Committee and the WDWC. The latter ensured a conduit of information from Wellington based aged care groups to the Advisory Committee. The WDWC's activities in this regard also involved reviewing planned Advisory Committee projects and forwarding recommendations and suggestions on the same. As well, the WDWC was able to coordinate the compiling of a list of local organisations involved in some way in the care of the aged and the range of services provided. It also had input as to how recent conference recommendations could be best applied in Wellington. Earlier the WDWC had collected and collated data for the Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged in regard to the types of clubs for the elderly which were available in Wellington.

12.

This information included their locations, facilities, costs to users, numbers of members (where formal memberships were required) and an assessment on the value of each. The Darby & Joan Club was held aloft as the best example. But club names in existence at the time such as "Friday Night Lounge" and "Saturday Night at 8" today tend to conjure up images more akin to young people's night clubs than meeting places for the elderly.

The WDWC also coordinated a list and an assessment of Wellington's aged care homes in the area. A possible model for future places of residence was envisaged as one possible outcome of this exercise. Existing homes included the Wellington City Mission accommodation, the Harry Squires Memorial Hostel and a home in Otaki. The Committee believed that the Harry Squires Memorial Hostel was too much like an institution with too many fixed rules to be the most ideal model to follow. It was also felt some of its facilities were too elaborate and were largely ignored for the more popular smoking lounge. Again it was the most expensive residence at just over 10 pounds (\$20) a week rent.

One outcome of the WDWC's work in improving the lot of Wellington's elderly citizens was a recommendation around the middle of the decade for the Advisory Committee to consider a village type concept for homes for the aged. Individual WDWC members such as the Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, Salvation Army, Wellington City Mission and Wellington Hospital Board among others had provided the WDWC with a great deal of information from their own work with Wellington's seniors. The Red Cross was providing gifts of blankets, shoes and clothes and also organised outings. It recommended through the WDWC the use of trained visitors to keep the elderly active and assist in increasing their independence and overseeing home help. St Johns were responsible for over 300 elderly people in the area. It had suggested forwarding through the WDWC to the Advisory Committee on Care for the Aged the better coordination of services and their administration. St Johns also argued for closer liaison between the various state and local authorities and voluntary organisations involved in providing care for the aged. This was in order to reduce over lapping and encroachment of service provision. The Salvation Army had also raised issues surrounding insanitary living conditions and the lack of good person hygiene as matters needing attention. All were passed on to central government and were later fed into considerations of whether to implement regulations governing the care of the aged in rest homes and boarding houses and the subsequent issuing of specific requirements.

For the WDWC, the standard of care for the elderly was of particular import over the latter part of the decade. And it continued to be so in subsequent years. The Committee was invited to offer comment on proposals regarding possible regulations (which it supported). Later members were also invited to review confidential early drafts of the regulations themselves and offer comments. Till then homes for the elderly were not licensed and there were no set standards set for the quality of accommodation or care.

In considering its own proposals for the Advisory Committee on Care for the Aged's consideration as to whether regulations were needed and if so what standards needed to be agreed to, WDWC members were in regular contact with the St Mary's Anglican Homes Guild. The Guild was overseeing the construction of a new facility for the aged in Messines Road, Karori. As this relationship grew the Guild was invited onto the WDWC's membership list. This was quickly taken up in May 1958.

13.

The Karori facility (the Bishop Holland Home) envisaged some 42 units in a hamlet accommodating up to 130 elderly people. WDWC members looked closely at the planned facilities for the concept and the standards of care planned for the residents. These were taken into account in its report to the Advisory Committee's for its consideration of the new licensing provisions.

The eventual outcome, under the auspices of the Department of Health, included minimum standards of accommodation and care, the number of residents under care for the new requirements and standards to apply, rights to inspections, employment of appropriately trained staff, compulsory registers of residents to be kept together with annual returns to the Department, and also the need to inform the authorities within 24 hours of any serious injuries or illnesses. Amendments to draft standards suggested by the WDWC included extending coverage to all over 60 years of age rather than from age 65. This was in order to incorporate the many people that the WDWC believed who were cared for in sub standard accommodation. The WDWC also sought the inclusion of fully defined standards for so called "qualified" staff.

This direct line of input into (indeed often in full collaboration with) high level central government decision making was one of the remarkable features of the WDWC's early years. The level and degree of that co-operation is something that today's Welcoss Executive would only marvel at and be envious of. Social Security and Department of Health representation on the WDWC was certainly part of the reason for the relationship. But very quickly the new Wellington umbrella and coordinating body was making its worth felt at the highest levels. It was not afraid of using the strongest of terms to put its suggestions to improve the lot of the city's needy. The Committee's ability to gain the support and participation of Wellington's various welfare and social service providers gave the city a coordinated input into eventual central government decision making. The WDWC was also not averse in taking a strong hand with central government agencies where it felt a need. One example was its criticism of the Health Department's laxity in implementing a Conference on a Care of the Aged recommendation to extend the ongoing benefit to a spouse or family for two months after an elderly person's death. An answer as to why not was explicitly sought. When this was not forthcoming an even sharper reminder soon followed.

While improving the level of care for the elderly was a key component in WDWC activities over the 1950s it was not the only one. The Committee also reviewed monthly Special Assistance Fund grants for the area. In doing so it looked closely at reasons as to why applications may have been turned down. Firstly in case it was felt an injustice had been committed. And secondly as to what other local providers might be able to help out instead.

Also, and despite some dissent by a minority of Wellington's various welfare agencies, the collation of a central welfare register continued. Its completion stalled in the middle of the decade but the Committee again supported its resurrection in the latter 1950s. The Committee also proceeded with the completion and publication of a Wellington Directory of Social Service and Welfare Organisations. Costs for this were defrayed in part by donations from bodies such as a Rotary and by donations from listed agencies. Much of the typing for the directory was undertaken by the Joyce Lake, the Committee's secretary Wally Lake's wife.

14.

After an initial distribution (paid for out of Social Security Department funds) copies of the Directory were sold for the sum of two shillings and sixpence (25 cents) inclusive of postal costs. Later in the decade remaining stocks were forwarded to enquirers free of charge.

Over the first decade the Committee sought, and received, expressions of interest from people willing to take on domestic assistance (home help) for Wellington's elderly. By May, 1953 some 15 such helpers had come forward and numbers subsequently outstripped demand. Permission was later sought, and granted, by the Social Security Department for the new service to extend to families where mothers had become temporarily incapacitated through sickness or injury.

In April 1953 the Education Department also approached the Committee for help in boarding partially sighted children in suitable homes near Te Aro School since the school was involved in running special classes for them.

Another matter to occupy the Committee's interest was to do with allocations of comfort funds to patients at the Wellington Mental Hospital. Small amounts of monies were available for those patients without any other means of support (eg from their families) to spend in the hospital's shop and canteen. It also raised the plight of people, mainly refugees and new immigrants, reported living in rude huts on waste ground and having to exist within less than the minimum acceptable living standards of the day.

Until 1956 the active participation in the Committee's activities by the Wellington City Council had been minimal. However, late in that year the Committee was approached by the Council's newly appointed Public Relations Officer, Mr A. G. Feislier. The new appointee was from Auckland and he wrote to the Committee seeking its interest and support in establishing a branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau in the city. He was invited to an early meeting the following year to outline his proposal which would be then discussed and possibly attract the support and ongoing involvement of the WDWC.

For the first year of operation Committee administration costs had been held to zero. At the end of 1953, Members were given notice that a one off membership fee of one pound (\$2) per organisation would be sought the following year. While there would be no ongoing administration costs, the money collected would defray extraordinary expenses such as newspaper advertising.

Over the decade as the knowledge of the WDWC's work grew so too did the number of approaches by increasing numbers of Wellington's welfare and social support agencies. These reflected the heightening or emergence of social issues in and around the city which sought Committee involvement. Over this and the following decade a broadened membership reflected these issues as can be seen by the addition of groups (either for a time or ongoing), such as the Disabled Servicemen's Association, the Disabled Servicemen's Re-establishment League, the Anglican Social Services Board, the Mothers' Helpers Association, the Wellington Seniors' Club, Birthright, the National Society on Alcoholism, the New Zealand Association for the Deaf, and the Intellectually Handicapped Society.

15.

The increasing membership numbers were placing increasing demands on the Department of Social Security's available meeting space. Consequently in May 1955 WDWC meetings shifted to the St John's Ambulance Hall in Vivian Street. Further pressure on meeting accommodation saw yet another move in 1957 to the Patriotic Board rooms in Woodward Street. Demolition work noise then forced a shift to the Town Hall and the rooms of the Mayoral Metropolitan Relief Fund.

From the new Committee's beginnings in 1952 secretarial services were provided through the auspices of the Social Security Department. It was inevitable that Committee secretaries would at some time either move out of Wellington on public service transfer, be promoted to higher positions, or gain alternative employment in the private sector or in other central government departments. The Committee's first secretary was Mr W. R. A. (Wally) Lake. After moving to the Health Department in 1955 (but soon to become an active Committee member) he was replaced by Mr G. J. Buckley. The Committee's second secretary was himself promoted within the Social Security Department in 1957. Mr R.C. H. Eggleton then assumed the role.

In a 1999 taped interview Wally Lake described how he and the next Chair in waiting, Mrs H.D. Muir (representing the Mayoral Metropolitan Relief Fund and the Smith Family) worked together to establish the Wellington Senior Club. With fund raising providing a considerable sum in those days of 26,000 pounds (\$52,000) the club eventually opened in a building in Willis Street opposite St John's Church. Both he and Mrs Muir were also Chairs of the club at different times of the club's early history.

Mr Lake retained his involvement with the WDWC as part of the Health Department's Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged and then again when he became Director of the Presbyterian Social Services in 1959. Mr Lake's active membership continued for some 33 years until his retirement from the then renamed Wellington Social Services Committee (WSSC) in 1985.

An even more significant personnel change occurred in 1958. The Chairman since the Committee's inception, Mr Syd Cross, handed the reins to Mrs H. D. Muir at the end of that year. Mrs Muir had represented the Smiths' Family and the Mayoral Metropolitan Relief Fund on the Committee from day one. Her own leadership of WDWC from the Chair was to continue for another eight years until her sudden and untimely death.

Following the end of Father Brian Sherry's chairmanship at the end of 1982 there was a long succession of just 12 month tenures. At least until Mrs Anne Town, representing the New Horizons Trust for Women, succeeded to the then Welcoss chair in 1992. It was a position she held until the end of 1996.

The end of decade saw the Committee considering drafts of the Wellington City Council's disaster plans and strategies. Committee members were fully behind the proposals and pondered matters concerning sites of relief centres and billeting of evacuees.

16.

By the start of the 1960s new WDWC members included the Family Protection Society, the Relief of the Aged Needy, the National Society on Alcoholism (a separate organisation from Alcoholics Anonymous) and in July 1960, Birthright. The Government's Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged too sought observer status.

The first years of the new decade realised the need for a reprint of the Committee's Social Services Directory. But it was not to be the only reprint. Unfortunately after its printing and distribution at five shillings (50 cents) a copy a considerable amount of time was required preparing amendment inserts to be sent out.

The sheer volume of dealing with the issue of aged care required the establishment of a sub-committee. This included representation of St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Wesley Church, City Mission and Presbyterian Social Services. Former secretary, Wally Lake, was the last named organisation's representative who continued his involvement through the 1960s to build a significant long service record with the WDWC. The sub-committee was also active in inspecting and reporting on residential premises for the aged and in ensuring waiting lists for admission were kept up to date. At the start of the 1960s there were some 236 applications for single rooms and five double room applications for accommodation. At the time the average age of admissions stood at 80 years. They were people who had to be able to still take care of themselves. One initiative the sub committee reviewed was for short term foster home care to alleviate unmet demand for places in one or others of the various rest homes. The sub-committee supported the concept but believed large number of university students coming to the city would probably be a preferred choice of residents for likely providers.

Yet a further proposal concerned the possibility of prefabricated temporary units to be erected on properties of the children of elderly parents. This was in order for them to be able to continue to care for them. The Government's Committee on Care for Aged was supportive and agreed to sponsor the concept.

With its status growing the Committee produced its first letterhead and paid for 1,000 copies. By the end of 1960, however, the balance of the Trust Account stood at just one pound, seven shillings and two pence (\$2.72). Members were then asked for donations to build up the account to help take the WDWC through to 1970.

REACHING OUT IN A DECADE OF TURBULANCE

Background:

The next 10 years were turbulent ones. Yet the WDWC increased both its reach and its range of activity. The group was led first by Mrs H.D. Muir (1958-65) and then by Mr L.G. Clark of Presbyterian Social Services (1966-67). It was then the turn of Miss E. Richards who retained the Chair from 1968 until 1975 inclusive. These Chairpersons operated in an era of massive change affecting events at home and abroad. On the international stage the Cuban missile crisis brought the cold war very close to being a "hot" one. Then the western world's most charismatic leader of the day, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated in November 1963. That and both younger brother Bobby's own shooting and that of United States civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, some years later reverberated around the world. The removal from the world stage of Martin Luther King did nothing to deter the growing momentum of civil rights as an issue worth taking up everywhere. A police led massacre at South Africa's Soweto in 1960 and ongoing harassment and even killings of black activists in the southern parts of the United States were insufficient to keep the lid on the issue. At home protests against South Africa's system of apartheid and continued sporting contacts with that country began to attract a wider, and more mainstream, audience. A group of protestors who tried to prevent the plane with the 1960 All Black rugby team for South Africa taking off by trying to run under its wheels gained the protest movement considerable publicity and mana.

Elsewhere in the world astronauts launched into deep space and Elvis remained the king of popular music. This status came under threat in the early 1960s from a number of newcomers. The Beatles, Beach Boys, Monkees, Eric Burdon & the Animals, the Kinks and Rolling Stones launched a new era of rock'n roll. A new dance craze, the "Twist," stormed the country in 1962 and reigned for two to three years. The Beatles eventual visit to the capital together with a test match played against the first ever visit of the French rugby team (which probably should never have taken place in near hurricane winds) became the two of the most talked about local events of the decade. Over the 10 years the All Blacks continued their dominance in international rugby and Colin Meads replaced Don Clarke as the nation's rugby icon. 1968 was also the year of Woodstock while the anti-establishment songs of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez gave support to those protesting against the war in Viet Nam. This conflict was impacting more and more on New Zealand as our involvement in it expanded. As a result like in America home grown protests grew. Closer to home the Australian group, The Seekers joined the Kingston Trio and the Brothers Four in keeping folk music alive and well while on our own shores John Hoare, Howard Morrison, Peter Posa and Eddie Low ensured New Zealanders' big appetite for country and western music was met. For those more classically inclined the Mobil Song Quest continued to expose classical singers of world standard. On the entertainment scene the Miss New Zealand contests were still free of exploitation protests. Of singular significance, however, was the entry of black and white television into our homes. Through this long awaited medium came "Coronation Street," "The Waltons," "Peyton Place," Peter Read and the "Night Sky," Peter Sinclair and "Mastermind" and the "C'm On Show," and Selwyn Togood's "In The Bag." Also the dramas of "The Forsythe Saga," and "War & Peace also gripped New Zealand watchers." This last named series introduced us to the acting skills of a young Anthony Hopkins for the first time.

18.

There was also "Get Smart," "Z-Cars," and Patrick McGoochan's cult series "The Prisoner"; Best of all for many viewers was the advent of All Black rugby test coverage, albeit delayed.

On New Zealand's political front the 1960s were "Holyoake years." President Lyndon Johnson made a visit to gear up support for the conflict in Viet Nam. With increasing local protest against our involvement in this war Johnson's popularity during his visit here must have been something of a welcome surprise to the National government. As well, Barry Crump became the good keen man and the ideal model for many Kiwi blokes while women's skirts grew increasingly shorter and legs longer. Coffee lounges and cafes replaced milk bars and were where many of the best of the country's popular music scene honed their skills.

Late in the decade hotel bars began opening until 10 pm six days a week under revised licensing laws. Drinking hours may have changed but habits remained with beer and spirits remaining the tippable of choice. With the economy needing increased sources of unskilled labour increasing numbers of Pacific Island immigrant families began to influence our cultural diversity.

In the skies the much loved DC3s were joined by Fokker Friendships and Viscounts while on the road Australian Holdens began to compete in the large car market with their American and English counterparts. Ford prefects, consuls and zephyrs remained popular choices for motorists however. Volkswagens also made their debut to give those who preferred smaller models a choice over the well performed Ford Prefect, Austin Mini or Morris Minor. By the middle of the decade DC 8s had brought New Zealand into the world of international jet travel and the world became a much more accessible place as a result.

Very early in the decade women teachers were placed on the same salary scales as their male counterparts. This was the first significant step towards equality in the workforce for women. Fifty years later equal pay across the board may be generally applied but remains still not universal.

1961-70: Summary:

Between 1961 and 1970 Wellington's social sector was subject to some degree of turbulence and the WDWC itself was not immune to its impact. Having to change annual balance sheets to decimal currency after 1967 was a mere drop in the bucket. A 1968 report to the Committee on the possibility of a Citizens' Advice Bureau for the city had also raised the need of a social and welfare oversight group with a broader purpose and wider objectives than those within the WDWC's existing sphere. A concept of a Wellington Council of Social Services fully representative of all Wellington's social and welfare agencies was held up as the appropriate body. This was especially so given discussions underway at the time to establish a National Council of Social Services.

Apparent government prevarication (or the slowness of the legislative process) in introducing a licensing system governing the building and running of homes for the aged was a constant frustration to WDWC members through much of the decade. Remember, this issue formed much of the WDWC's work over the greater part of the previous nine years and remained unresolved. Ensuring adequate care for and achieving a sufficient volume of quality residential accommodation choices for Wellington's aged population to meet demand was to prove a continuing battle. Annual reports in almost every year of the decade highlighted the issue as the biggest the region faced.

Any frustrations at the slowness of the legislative process over the matter were, however, tempered with delight at the success of the Wellington Senior Club. The club's establishment, and resulting popularity with the city's senior citizens. By 1970 membership was around 600 with a constant waiting list of around 50. The success of the Senior Club was the result of the Committee's determination to alleviate the loneliness of Wellington's elderly.

The needs of Wellington's elderly (including additional ad hoc services such as meals on wheels, laundry, and home help services in addition to accommodation) was not the only issue on monthly meeting agendas. The mid 1960s brought reports of increasing illegal drug use and dependence to the notice of Committee meetings for the first time. Around 1965 most prosecutions for illegal drug trafficking and use had largely involved New Zealand's ethnic Chinese communities. Cannabis and later LSD, however, were becoming the party drugs of choice. By then they were increasingly available to a much wider section of the population. A downstream effect was increased police prosecutions for both possession and supply.

To supplementary assistance statistics placed in front of Committee members at their monthly meetings were added district unemployment figures. While initial numbers of the unemployed seem ridiculously small compared to today's lists they heralded what was to become a major social issue by the 1980s. By June 1967, Wellington's registered unemployed were over 2,000.

Support for the work of a relatively new member organisation, Stepping Stones, in its bid to improve the quality of welfare and rehabilitation of patients discharged from Porirua Mental Hospital was yet further evidence of an increasing range of social issues being brought to the Committee's attention.

Lobbying to achieve more disabled workshop facilities was another band wagon the Committee willingly climbed on during this period along with child welfare. In particular this involved the welfare of deaf and partially deaf children.

The increasing range of issues now involving Committee attention was reflected in its growing membership. By 1970 membership had grown to 36 welfare providers and six government departments (Social Security, Child Welfare, Health, Maori Affairs, Justice and Vocational Guidance). Joining Stepping Stones on the Committee were 11 other local welfare support organisations and/or Wellington branches of national bodies. These were: Wellington Epilepsy, the Baptist Union of New Zealand, Wellington Association for Deaf Children, Otaki Health Camp, the Wellington Multiple Sclerosis Society, Birthright, Heritage, Kapiti District Trust Board, the Wellington Branch of the Intellectually Handicapped Society, the After Care Association and FISH (an Eastbourne based cross denominational Christian friendship and advisory service).

In addition to facilities for the aged the Committee involved itself in: investigations into the possibility of a Citizens' Advice Bureau for the city; reports on welfare support requirements for new suburban expansions; counselling services for university students; payments of social security benefits including veterans' allowances and welfare support for mental hospital patients; a Wellington civil defence infrastructure; further editions of the social services directory; funding for projects such as the Senior Citizens Club and general Committee administration costs; hospital beds for elderly sick; youth related issues including growing alcoholism and drug dependence; the provision of night shelter facilities in the city; and the slowness of the legal process in ensuring maintenance was paid to families by erring husbands.

The 1960s were also times of outreach and Committee "outings." From time to time monthly meetings were held on member organisations' premises. These were usually followed by a tour of facilities and activities. Visits to disabled workshops and the Otaki Health Camp were two instances of this process. As well, a sub committee with a specific focus of care for the aged made regular visits to various homes for the elderly around the region to inspect and report on the quality of resident facilities and their arrangements for the care of their residents.

Access to top government departmental officials and their committees and even Crown ministers was regular. The Minister of Health through much of the decade, the Hon D. McKay, addressed annual general meeting (AGM) attendances more than once. His Social Security and Housing ministerial colleagues also often participated in these events. So too did the Mayor, Mr Francis (Later Sir Francis) Kitts. On one occasion Her Excellency Lady Fergusson, wife of the Governor General, was a revered guest speaker at one AGM.

1961-70: Decade In Detail

The Committee entered the 1960s with great hopes. However, some members still smarted under what they believed was some unfair criticism levelled at the group by Labour's Social Security Minister, the Hon Mabel Howard. These came just prior to the new decade. Her comments rankled and were responded to in the press at the time. But her words still hurt.

Hopes largely revolved around progress on legislation for the compulsory registration and licensing of residential homes for the elderly together with a raft of governing regulations. Members had previously reviewed and commented on several drafts of the proposed regulations towards the end of the previous decade. Earlier efforts had pushed hard for the licensing of homes with more than two residents. It was to the Committee's consternation, therefore, to find that the decade steadily proceeded with still no governing legislation in place. Then levels of angst among Committee members rose even further when with the decade's end in sight proposed changes to the draft rules lifted their coverage to homes of six or more not two as recommended by the Committee.

Committee views on the time being taken to pass licensing legislation were forthright and were conveyed to the Minister of Health as well as to the Health Department and its Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged. There were also aspects of final proposals that Committee members felt would discourage a number of residential homes being built. These included the ratio of staff in residence to residents and the number of hand basins per resident. The Committee believed the costs of meeting these may deter future construction in a period of ever increasing demand. Proposed fire fighting facilities, the size of single and double rooms, kitchen facilities, and dining accommodation were yet other matters gone over in detail and reported back by Committee members.

The Committee also brought to the Government's notice the lack of availability of appropriately trained health care workers to staff registered homes for the aged. And it strongly re-iterated its preference for the licensing of homes of more than two residents. The Government's advisors, however, were of the opinion that any less than six may well deter people offering accommodation to elderly people in private homes. This initiative had been previously proposed, supported, and advocated as one way of meeting elderly care demand in the region. At least on a temporary basis. As such it proved somewhat of a let down when later drafts of the rules to govern rest home care had come down firmly on six or more.

In March 1961, the WDWC's sub committee on the aged lobbied the Government to do more to increase subsidy rates available for aged care accommodation in the Wellington area. As well, sub committee members proposed exemptions from income tax on gifts and legacies left to welfare organisations together with estate duties. A subsequent report based around the focus of the deputation to the Ministers of Health and Finance was later released to the local press.

The Returned Servicemen's Association (RSA) was fully behind the approach. Its own particular concern was obtaining access to homes for World War I and II veterans. The RSA believed a fully investigation was warranted into the issue of housing for veterans. The Minister of Health, the Hon Mr N. Shelton and Mr Seath, deputising for the Minister of Finance, agreed a higher subsidy than the current 3% was probably relevant to city areas.

22.

Mr Shelton also agreed to receive a further submission from Masonic Homes for a subsidy towards a planned facility in Lower Hutt. Mr Seath confirmed that tax matters around the issue of gifting were already under review although exemptions from estate duties required much more initial work.

Issues surrounding provision of accommodation and welfare for the aged took another turn in July with the Government announcing a survey of New Zealand's elderly. The survey was to assess the needs of the over 65s in terms of housing, welfare assistance, custodial care, nursing care, and ancillary services. The results were to be forwarded to the WDWC for comment before any action at government level was taken.

By April 1961, WDWC finances had increased to sixteen pounds and six shillings (\$33.60). By July the very healthy total of sixty seven pounds, six shillings and two pence (\$134.62) had been achieved through member donations. Also, an Art Union grant of one hundred and twenty pounds (\$240.00) was approved to defray the larger portion of the cost to reprint the Social Services Directory (total of one hundred and eighty pounds or \$360.00).

At the 1961 AGM Government Ministers Shelton and Rae (Housing) and Mr D. P. Riddiford MP addressed those present. Attendees heard that some nine percent of supplementary assistance to social security beneficiaries was already spent in the Wellington District

The Chair, Mrs H. D. Muir and her deputy, Mr L.G. Clark, headed an WDWC Executive Committee going into 1962 comprising Mr W (Wally). Lake, Mr C. W. Thorley, Miss M. Tiller, Miss E. Richards, and Miss T. Lissington. Mrs H.D. Muir was elected to the chair at the following AGM. Executive meeting minutes were forwarded to the full list of member organisations after each meeting.

The end of February 1962 saw the printing of the new Social Services Directory edition. Prices per copy were set at two shillings and sixpence (45 cents) for WDWC members and five shillings (50 cents) for non-members. The Executive also took an increased role in the Directory's distribution and publicity. By September the Committee had received numerous requests for amendments including strong representations for changes from the Department of Justice and the Salvation Army. The Committee undertook to compile, print, and distribute amended inserts.

Over the first part of that year Committee members had approached an Auckland entrepreneur, J. Poultney, in regard to a concert for Wellington's elderly citizens. This was being looked at along the same lines as a previous Auckland event which had been something of a success. The target audience would be residents of various pensioner homes. A two hour show was suggested at a total cost of one hundred pounds (\$200.00). The cost included the hire of the concert chamber, remuneration costs of the imported artists, and promoter's fees. However, advanced bookings for an audience of some 900 paying two shillings a head would have been needed to cover costs. Mr Poultney suggested instead a reduced concert programme substituted with an older persons' talent quest. Records do not confirm whether the event proceeded. But correspondence included clippings from the Auckland show which were provided by Mr Poultney. At this particular show one of the stars was a 98 year old singer.

23.

The planned concert and talent quest was not the end of the Committee's experiences with the Auckland entrepreneur. He was to turn up in Wellington just a few years later promoting a "gold card" type of discount booklet for senior citizens. The reality did not turn out quite as expected. When the complaints started coming in many retailers confessed to having no knowledge of Mr Poultney or his scheme. A number of retailers had signed up to the scheme as had a number of Wellington's senior citizens. But the retailers in the scheme tended to be providers of goods at the higher cost end of the retail market such as television sets, other higher priced electrical goods, and jewelery. When further clarification as to the scheme's details were sought from Mr Poultney, now purportedly in residence in Lower Hutt, it was found he had vanished.

The Department of Health's new policy on subsidies for cottages erected by religious and welfare organisations also came under executive fire over its timing given the national survey on the needs of the aged had yet to be concluded and reported on. The executive believed the top subsidy rate was unrealistic given housing costs. It was feared that one impact might be a lessening of the number of units being constructed for dependent aged folk.

A arrival of "mixed gender flatting" in the city was a new phenomenon that establishment authorities took something of a dim view of. Concerns about one young university lass in such an environment had drawn some public attention and comment raised the question of the need for student counselling services. It was reported that Victoria University was the only university in the country at that time which did not provide such services

The next year 1963 was to prove a momentous one for both the new Executive Committee and the wider membership. While frustrated that the evident expansion in the provision of residential care for the elderly remained unable to meet demand, a decision to look at the possibility of forming an Old Folks Club in the city provided a much more positive focus. To make progress another sub-committee was formed to achieve momentum on the concept. The Mayor, Mr Francis Kitts agreed to chair a public meeting focused on a proposal to finance, provide, fit out, and staff a venue of some 2,000 square feet minimum. The idea was born out of reports of increased loneliness among older citizens (particularly those in City Council flats and in private inner city boarding homes) which a social club could well significantly alleviate. The subsequent meeting met with resounding support and generated radio coverage and the presence of the new medium of television.

The project was underway with a committee formed from those attending the public meeting together with six WDWC members.

The full committee were Mesdames H. D. Muir, Churchill, Benney, Newport and Coutts.; Miss Richards; and Messrs L. A. Allen, A. J. Allen, Thompson, Old, Salmon and Clark. Mrs Muir was elected convenor. It was quickly determined that the new facility was to be called the Wellington Citizen's Club and membership was to be accessible to the over 60s for a join up fee of five shillings (50 cents). After the public meeting broke up, some 69 attendees left having signed up and paid. The committee then got down to searching out an appropriate venue and attend to the club's aims, details of activities allowed, rules, and membership criteria.

24.

Even without premises membership continued to grow and by the end of July the club had 82 enrollments. By the end of September that year total membership applications stood at over 200. By the 1964 AGM active membership was 400 and growing.

The club was certainly an idea whose time had definitely come. This was borne out further in 1965 with the appointment of a salaried permanent manager and a welfare officer. The latter's appointment reflected an additional advisory service for members again resulting from need and a desire to do everything possible to meet the needs of the city's elderly.

An unused church in Aro Street was offered as temporary (and free) quarters for the new club. The RSA too offered its premises on particular days at a cost of six shillings (60 cents) a day while the club's establishment sought the help of the WDWC in providing afternoon teas for gatherings. The new Golden Kiwi lottery came to the party with a grant of two thousand pounds (\$4,000) to defray any rental costs of hired premises.

In the meantime other WDWC business saw funeral costs on the meeting agenda for the first time. This followed concerns expressed to the WDWC that funeral directors were somewhat deficient in providing pre-funeral estimates for their services. The Committee took the view that funeral directors should provide brochures giving their various cost breakdowns. Mr Lake too brought to the WDWC's notice of the need for short term accommodation for the care of mainly pre-school children. In 1964, the plight of separated mothers and/or wives who were without the support of any other benefit, and whose former husbands and partners were failing to meet their legal maintenance responsibilities, resulted in strong WDWC representations to the Minister of Justice seeking a faster legal process to ensure compliance for erring husbands. Sadly the Minister's reply was not all that encouraging. He explained the current process which allowed little room for speeding up. But he did acknowledge the issue was already being considered by the Government. Some assistance was achieved through Salvation Army and other welfare and religious organisations offering emergency accommodation for women and children where this was needed. Once again the efforts of the Committee showed that the WDWC was not a talk fest. It was a body that got out there, tackled issues and achieved results.

At the 11th AGM at the end of 1963 the Kapiti District Trust Board, the Prisoners' Aid Society, the After Care Association and the Vocational Guidance Centre were admitted to WDWC membership. The British Epilepsy Foundation followed in May 1964.

1964 got off to a "bang" with a Golden Kiwi grant of twenty two thousand, five hundred pounds (\$45,000.00) for permanent Senior Club premises in the Willis Street Chambers building opposite St John's Presbyterian Church. A further six thousand pounds (\$12,000) was gifted for fittings. At this particular show one of the stars was a 98 year old. A radio appeal for remaining funding was launched in July 1964. The appeal gave the project further publicity and impetus. A street appeal in July 1965 gathered a further one thousand and fifty one pounds (\$2,100.00). By the end of 1967 membership stood at a 600 maximum with a waiting list of 40 to 50 applicants.

25.

It was also in September that year that the WDWC protested to the Minister of Health over its intended raising of the compulsory registration of residential care homes for the aged to those providing facilities from two to for six or more. Arising from the changing roles of initial members and subsequent new applications for WDWC membership the Committee opted to provide time at each meeting for a member organisation's representative to outline its aims, roles, and activities. It was also about this time that some meetings were scheduled on the premises of member groups. These were then followed by a tour of their facilities. Thus taking a more direct approach to imparting just what member organisations were about.

In 1965 adoption trends of children of young unmarried mothers occupied the Committee for part of the year. The Child Welfare Division reported over 5,200 illegitimate births in the district. This equated to an increase of 17%. The Division also reported that demands for adoption of illegitimate children were being met save for those of mixed descent and of Pacific Island children. As such it was likely that more and more unwanted children would need to be brought up in institutions.

While the evolving Senior Club was a real positive over the previous two years the end of 1965 found the WDWC exasperated by the lack of apparent progress on the licensing of residential homes for the elderly. A decade or more had passed and the required legislation and attendant regulations were still awaiting their passing and promulgation. This exasperation was passed on in no uncertain manner to those demed responsible. The year did end on a bright note with the attendance of Her Excellency, Lady Fergusson, the wife of the Governor General Sir Bernard Fergusson, at that year's AGM. She congratulated the Committee on its work in improving the lot of the aged before other attendees which included the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Walter Nash, National Government Ministers for Health and Housing and the Mayoress, Mrs Kitts.

The WDWC greeted 1966 in mourning with the sudden passing of its revered chairperson of some eight years, Mrs H. D. Muir. Her untimely death was hard felt and it took some effort to generate the required focus for the year ahead. In April the Wellington Epilepsy Association was invited to join the Committee while yet another Social Services Directory update and reprint loomed in May.

The highlight of the year was without doubt the opening of the Wellington Senior Club in its Willis Street premises. The new premises opened free of debt and with 528 financial members. This event was tempered with the news that the construction of 115 new pensioner flats now occupied, with 106 under construction, 79 under design and 112 in planning still was unable to keep pace with demand. As well, there had been a number of closures of some of the larger homes in the region.

1966 closed with the Committee's first ever formal balance sheet presented to the AGM showing a balance for the year of three thousand, three hundred and eighty four pounds, seventeen shillings and five pence (\$7,800.000).

In March the following year further consternation was openly expressed at the impact of rising costs of state house and telephone rentals on the city's elderly.

Also, long waits for accessing either item anyway did nothing to advance the credibility of government agencies responsible. Indeed, such bureaucratic foibles were to eventually lead to a play and then a popular satirical television series called "Gliding On". The programme "sent up" the worst of dealing with central government bureaucracies. The show gave thousands of watchers, but not everyone perhaps, many a chuckle. There was a lot of excitement too at the coming of decimal currency. But this was too big and serious an issue to provide much laughter. But with a long and intensive public information campaign the nation, including schools, coped well with the change when it eventually came.

The Wellington Baptist Union was admitted to WDWC membership in June 1967 as was an Eastbourne based co-denominational religious group, FISH. This group provided support, companionship and social activities for the suburb and its environs. The organisation's name derived from the earliest Christian symbol and by the time of its application for WDWC membership it had 110 active members. And it had already responded to some 800 requests involving some 400 actual tasks. In February 1968 the above two groups were joined by the Wellington Association for Deaf Children and in the middle of the following year by the Wellington Multiple Sclerosis Society.

It was in the previous year that unemployment figures started coming before Committee meetings. In September that year the Wellington district's total number of unregistered unemployed stood at 192. "Small bikkies" these days maybe. But the figure did underpin what was to become a major social issue throughout the country. The two oil shocks of the 1970s only served to speed up the increase in these numbers. So too did the entry of one of the nation's largest overseas importers of New Zealand produce, Britain, to the European Union (then called the European Economic Community). Resulting restrictions on the import of the country's produce to Britain and Europe hit our economy (and local job prospects) hard.

Over 1968 WDWC members took up lobbying the relevant local authorities for more disabled workshop type facilities along the lines of that run by the Disabled Servicemen's Re-Establishment League. Two years later the concept of sheltered workshops was fully supported with a sub committee established to seek appropriate sites. A sub-committee also investigated again the potential for a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Wellington. The initial finding was that although it was a great concept it may be better catered for through an expanded public relations and information office under the auspices of the Wellington City Council. A representative of that office subsequently sought the Committee's approval to attend future Committee meetings. This was granted.

In April 1969 the Committee was also addressed by the Volunteer Service At Home group. The organisation provided a 24 hour a day answering service receiving requests for personal help with household tasks including gardening and house painting. A service not too dissimilar to today's Time Bank initiative. In May, members also visited Te Aro School which catered for partially deaf children.

In June 1969, the Committee Executive was extended to include representatives of the Wellington Hospital Board, the District registrar of Social Security and the District Social Welfare Officer. The fourth edition of the Social Services Directory was also begun around the same time.

27.

Dr Murphy from the health Department provided the keynote address to the final AGM of the 1960s. His topic focused on the growing incidence of drug use around the world and introduced a new term, drug dependence. It was a phrase which was to be heard a great deal more in subsequent decades.

Before the year's end, founding WDWC member, Mr L. G. Clark resigned from the Hospital Board and, therefore, as its representative on the Committee. And again prior to year's end he also retired from the Committee itself ending nearly two full decades of service. Many of these years were served in the role of Deputy Chair.

Opportunity was provided to WDWC members in 1970 to provide input into how best to ensure adequate welfare and social support could be given the prospective purchases of homes and land in the new suburb of Mapuia. Occasional guest speakers at meetings had become much the norm by the decade's end and a possible 1970 list was considered early in the new year. Outreach visits to Te Hopai Home, the Central park Hospital and the new night shelter were undertaken in March. The WDWC had supported the provision of the last named over a number of previous years as a much needed City facility which involved six hard years of effort.

News that Sprott House in Karori was to open in November was greeted with considerable delight. Efforts on behalf of the age lacked no less intensity on the eve of a new decade with some hard lobbying of authorities to provide geriatric beds in private convalescent home when the shortage of such beds in public hospitals became acute. Such provisions already operated in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch which served to under pin the worth of the Committee's approach.

The decade produced one further rabbit from the hat with a name change in August that year. At that time the WDWC became the Wellington Social Services Committee (WSSC). As a result whether or not a written constitution was required was one of the new body's earliest discussions. An Executive was to continue to meet monthly with full membership meetings every quarter. The move was an outcome of a review into the possible need for a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Wellington. This time the concept was supported. And the committee's report included what form the service should take, its location and its organisation and oversight.

The committee proposed that the CAB's functions be limited to referring enquirers to existing agencies and provide simple advice on every day matters. It was not to be a counselling or an emergency service. Organisation and control was recommended to be under the joint representation of local welfare and social support bodies.

While not being part of its brief the ad hoc committee reported its belief that a local welfare council be established to be the ultimate objective in terms of joint and coordinated welfare effort in Wellington City. One of the drivers for the committee's opinion was considerable support currently building for a National Council of Social Services. The Committee thus recommended a fully representative body for the city comprising social and welfare agencies joining together to improve the welfare services available to all citizens.

28.

The new body's purposes would be to: develop contact and understanding among the various agencies represented on the council; strengthen individual members to enable them to provide improved services to their clients; provide supplementary services better suited to a joint approach such as research and training; take an over view approach of social services in Wellington and ensure the best use of available resources in meeting various needs; become involved in social planning to support the delivery of city social services; help improve the city's physical and psychological environments; and lead co-operative based social and welfare projects.

The ad hoc committee's report acknowledged that the current WDWC roles were aligned with at least some of these objectives if not all.

So it was that 1970 brought its own significant change for the former WDWC just as a new decade dawned.

NEW NAME, NEW ROLE, NEW STRUCTURES

The background to the activities of the Wellington Social Services Committee (WSSC) in the 1970s saw a United States led escalation of the conflict in South East Asia. This escalation saw US allies Australia and New Zealand make additional commitments. The war concluded rather abruptly in 1973 after the United States and its allies brokered an ill fated withdrawal after extensive regional disruption from intensive bombing campaigns over the North Viet Nameese capital of Hanoi and neighboring nations of Laos and Cambodia. Intervention in the last two named countries under mined what had previously been stable governments. Both are still working to restore full stability some 40 years later. Indeed the Cambodian disruption was to lead to the overthrow of a revered monarchy and subsequent Pol Pot regime massacres of the nation's intellectual elite and millions more of its citizens.

The 1970s saw two oil shocks when the Arab nations formed OPEC and immediately pushed through a reduction in oil production and an increase in the price of the product. The move was in retaliation for the "West's" perceived support for, or at best its lethargy over, Israeli military and expansionist campaigns in the Middle East in 1973 and 1977. In this country the outcome was carless days. Here New Zealand drivers were to designate one day a week on which they would not drive. Kiwi ingenuity ensured plenty of exemptions and the measure proved only a partial success in preserving scarce petroleum reserves. Later as international tensions eased and petroleum flowed again the carless days quickly became forgotten.

The "Nixon tapes" and Watergate kept New Zealanders' attention on United States politics after the fall of Saigon. So too did the eventual fall of that nation's president. Rising Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and the subsequent overthrow of the Shah still reverberates. Saddam Hussein's Iraq launched a war against Iran which involved the use of chemical weapons and years of conflict through much of the 1970s. At home we had the first Labour Government in some 15 years. Led by the charismatic Norman Kirk, Labour trounced Sir John Marshall's National Party at the polls and looked as if it could govern well beyond two terms at least. Such was not to be as the Muldoon years and the rule of "Rob's Mob" were launched just three years later. This followed an even bigger defeat of Labour than National suffered three years previously. One of the reasons for the Labour defeat was a lack of perceived leadership within Labour ranks following the sudden illness and subsequent untimely death of Prime Minister Kirk part way through Labour's term. Before its demise Labour had led the country on the international stage by insisting a programmed tour by the South African rugby team was deferred. Cabinet Minister the Right Hon. Fraser Colman was also aboard the ship which sailed to Mururoa Atoll to protest at the continuation of French nuclear testing.

New Zealand's political merry go round continued with a background culture where short skirts for the younger generation of women still predominated but with longer skirts and leather boots competing in the female fashion stakes. For men the flared trousers, long hair, sideburns and droopy moustaches that first appeared at the end of the 1960s became even more the norm. However, the cardigans, walk shorts and long socks among the lower echelons of public service males remained in mode. Two particular events captured the attention of most New Zealanders for extended periods through the 1970s.

One was the Crewe Murders and the subsequent court trials of Arthur Allan Thomas. Undaunted Thomas supporters would not let the issue go. A subsequent 1980 judicial review of the two earlier convictions found that the case against Thomas' was short of being robust enough beyond all reasonable doubt. Police manipulation of the evidence was also found likely. Thomas was freed and compensated. The case fed at least one book, one television play and a movie. The disappearance of hitch hiker Mona Blades between Taupo and Napier too caused a stir. The case, a probable abduction and murder, remains yet unsolved.

The second major event was a passenger plane crash into the side of Mt Erebus in the Antarctic. Justice Peter Mahon's resultant litany of lies accusation levied at Air New Zealand over the cause of the crash stunned the nation.

On our roads the first standard Japanese car models appeared and began their take over of their American counterparts as preferred vehicles of choice. Chrysler Valiants and Ford Falcons upheld the larger American motoring tradition on our roads and both remained popular through the decade. Wolsley, Jaguar, Rover and Triumph waved the British flag while the popularity of General Motors' Holden range continued to expand. But Datsun (later Nissan) and Mazda and then Mitsubishi and Toyota models gradually began a steady take over of the nation's highways. By the end of the 1970s names such as Chevrolet, Dodge, Nash and de Soto had virtually vanished from our shores. They were joined by British makes such as Wolsleys, Humbers, Austins and the Morris range. By 1980, Humber 80s and Hillman and Hillman Super Minxes had almost become icons of the past. But the Hillman Hunter range and Jaguar and to a lesser extent Rover were to keep the British motoring flag aloft for some time yet.

One direct impact of Wellingtonians' love of their motor vehicles was an acceleration of motorway and other road construction projects as well as new high rise building construction in and around Wellington city. Victims of progress included the Bolton Street Cemetery and a number of boarding and residential establishments. The latter were demolished to make way for the new roads and buildings. The outcome was added pressure on the availability of accommodation for a number of needy categories of people. These included the aged, increasing numbers of university (and now new polytechnic students), and Pacific Island immigrants. The need now to plan for and cope with a new multi-cultural diversity and the attendant social impacts of this was of sufficient concern to earn comment in the first annual report of the new decade. The new Polytechnics that emerged were initially labelled Clayton universities (universities you can go to if you can't go to a real university). Nevertheless, they gradually assumed most trade certification related training and eventually many business oriented professional qualifications as well. The new institutions filled a significant education gap and gave access to higher qualifications to tens of thousands of New Zealanders who would otherwise have been shut out of the education system.

The influx of increasing numbers of families from the varying Pacific Island nations and dependencies was providing the city with a new and vibrant cultural mix. But this also came with a number of attendant problems. These included additional pressure on the availability of appropriate housing together with issues around access to health and education services.

31.

Wellington's skyline and physical environment continued to change at pace through the 1980s. But much of the new accommodation lay well beyond the means of the most needy to pay for it. Some four decades later the problem remains to be solved. Although a 2011 city wide affordable housing project launched by the Wellington City Council with the active participation of the now Wellington Council of Social Services (Welcoss) has begun to look for answers.

The early decade music rage was disco. As such, nightlife centred around longer opening hours for hotels, taverns, cafes and restaurants. On the sporting front we celebrated the Olympic victories of our rowing eight in 1972 and Walker in 1976.

Christchurch became the centre of the British Commonwealth early in 1974 when the Commonwealth Games were celebrated by an early and unexpected 5,000 metre win by Dick Tayler. These were also the games which showed that weight lifting was a pretty good spectator sport. Again the 1,500 metre contest between the Tanzanian Filbert Bayi and our own John Walker was a classic. Another great spectator sport was cricket, especially if you happened to be an Australian. The 90 plus miles an hour (150 kilometres an hour) thunderbolts of Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thompson frightened the life out of most of the world's batsmen at the time. With the bat, the Chappell brothers and Doug Walters were supreme and we did get to see several glimpses of Australian cricketing might on our shores over the latter part of both this decade and the next.

We also saw them defeated once or twice at our hands. One of these occasions was in 1974 on our own Lancaster Park turf. Here New Zealand opening batsman, Glenn Turner, hit a century in each innings. As well, in 1978, we recorded, and roundly celebrated, our first ever cricket test win over England. The latter years of the 1970s began what was one of cricket's golden eras for the country. The Hadlee brothers (Dayle and Richard), Glenn Turner, Brian Hastings, Bevan Congdon, Bruce Murray, Richard Collinge, Geoff and Hedley Howarth, Stephen Boock and Mark Burgess formed the basis of a competitive internal side which pushed the abilities of the bigger nations hard.

The 1970s was a decade of significant technological advances. Colour television made its entry around the middle of the decade and transistor radios became increasingly popular and cheaper. Business computers also took the stage. But unlike today they were huge pieces of equipment. The biggest versions often occupied whole rooms. One event with repercussions still some 33 years after was Russia's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The incursion led to a major boycott of the Olympic games the following year and indirectly a NATO military presence only just winding down in 2013.

1971-80: Summary

The decade began with the former WDWC operating under a new title, the Wellington Social Services Committee (Committee was later changed to Council) and meeting in a new venue, the Senior Citizens Club. Concern for the aged remained one of the key issues facing the newly named Committee. As such, members had looked carefully at a proposed National Old People's Council of New Zealand with a number of regional off-shoots across the country. The WSSC preferred a National Council of Social Services (something already being mooted in some quarters) with a much wider mandate than care of the aged. But the Committee was prepared to still support the original and narrower concept if that proved the wish of others. Eventually the proposal was followed through with including the founding of a Wellington Old People's Council.

1971 saw the start of a closer working relationship between the WSSC and some parts of the Wellington City Council. Despite the mayor's previous involvement at annual and special ad hoc meetings and the attendance of the Council's Public Relations Office staff at Committee meetings, many in the lower Council ranks were completely unaware of the Committee's existence. One such case was Council's wish to establish a duplicate organisation to assist it implement a range of co-operative local welfare ventures (initially relating to people living in condemned buildings). The new relationship steadily grew until today with both bodies working very closely together. This relationship includes participation and even leadership in major social welfare related service projects. Examples are the City Council's homelessness and affordable housing strategies, and a social services mapping project.

The following year began with a crisis. It had been put to the AGM that its purpose was close to being extinct. Just like the dinosaur. Some dissatisfaction had been expressed with the Committee's role and past achievements. As well, it was believed that Committee functions would henceforth likely lie within the realm of both the new Department of Social Welfare and the appointment of a Welfare Services Coordinator to the City Council. As it was the Department of Social Welfare withdrew its traditional provision of secretarial services to the WSSC through increased pressure on departmental resources. If these events were not enough the now past Chairman Mr Wally Lake advised that a purging of the membership role was necessary.

A 1952 founding member, Mr Lake was entering his third decade with the WSSC. He had always been someone whose desk was continually bending under the weight of allocated tasks. Social Service Directory updates was one responsibility that seemed to be always his. This had become an annual if not a twice a year task involving liaising with current and new contributors for updated details, obtaining quotes, and overseeing printing and distribution. Chasing up wayward returns of details and producing required amendments also seemed to go hand in hand with every update.

The Directory was not the only involvement Mr Lake had with the Committee. His long experience began with the WDWC and the recently renamed WSSC as secretary. This was while he was employed by the former Social Security Department, then the Health Department and again later as Director of Presbyterian Social Services in Wellington from 1959. His experience together with a wide array of useful contacts ensured him a role as the "go to" man. That is someone who was able to get things done.

His involvement with the WSSC was go through to the following decade until his retirement in 1985.

Yet another name which appeared first in the 1970s and was to also earn a revered place in the annals of the Committee in a long serving role as secretary was that of Mrs Norma Taylor. Mrs Taylor had first attended the WDWC in March 1968 as a representative of the Wellington Association for Deaf Children. Later she took on the role of Executive Secretary through much of the 1970s and into the following decade. Her first contact with the WDWC was via a newspaper report even though the Wellington Association of Deaf Children had been formed some 10 years prior.

1972 also saw the start of a long (and, as at 2013, not yet completely ended) involvement by David Robinson. He initially became involved with the WSSC through his capacity as a newly appointed Community Services Officer with the Wellington City Council. Later his participation was via the Wellington Community Child Care Association and then with a mental health services ad hoc group. His workload within the WSSC grew both in volume and complexity as the decade proceeded. His involvement culminated in his election to the WSSC (by then the Committee had become the Council) Chair from 1985-86. During both the 1970s and 1980s he also chaired many of the combined District Social Services Council meetings and played leading parts in the key funding and social planning projects. These were set up by the WSSC during this and the following decade. They were just two of a number of sub-committees (subsequently referred to as interest groups) established to focus on, investigate and report on specific issues of welfare related concern. The Funding Group was established at the latter end of the decade with its work becoming of more significant during the 1980s. Other sub-committees established over this and the following decade considered housing, the plight of itinerants, home help, overseeing each directory reprint, family stability, and care of the handicapped. A Rehabilitation Sub-Committee had been originally set up in August, 1970 with members paying early visits to the Disabled Re-establishment League facility in Lower Hutt, the IHC Opportunity Workshop in Porirua and Porirua Hospital's Occupational Therapy Unit.

The concept of social planning had begun to take root in the second half of the decade and gained significant momentum by the 1980s. It was given considerable push by new legislation requiring future town and country planning schemes to take due note of any potential social consequences and ensure these were mitigated. A WSSC seminar in October 1980 was devoted to the topic. Various residents' association representatives and the Wellington City Planner, Mr Ken Clarke, were among several interested parties in attendance. At the seminar David Robinson described the work of an ad hoc group of community workers and planners from throughout the country in developing a viable social planning model. The group spent six months in 1979 looking at the issue. Social planning was defined as including: encouraging community participation in planning schemes; ensuring a flow of ideas into the planning process; and better provision and distribution of social services from new town and country planning schemes. The WSSC confirmed that following a review of the group's report it had initiated a Wellington Social Planning Working Group to consider social planning needs for the city. The WSSC suggested that possible ongoing roles for the group might include: taking on a watchdog and reporting role; providing social input into the city's district scheme; and continuing to compile a register or directory of existing social services together with identifying and major gaps.

Towards the end of the period one of the leading lights of the WSSC's achievements, the Senior Club, had grown both in size and success. Its management committee thus decided to go it alone. Although the separation did not occur without some acrimony. The Club's committee had proceeded to make an appointment to the vacant position of Secretary-Manager and determine to set itself up as a stand alone organisation without reference to its founding and parent body. The double announcement was greeted if not with some shock then with and surprise by WSSC members when they were appraised of the move. There was also the legal status of funding from the Lottery Board to the WSSC for Senior Club activities which required clarification. In the end, and even if the the parting was not completely amicable, the Senior Club went into the future with the best wishes of the WSSC.

Over the two decades spanning 1970-1990 the roles, aims and even the title of the organisation came under continual review. During the 1970s and after becoming the WSSC the membership considered entering "District" back into the group's title and later again the word "Region." The former was to align the Committee with a number of District Social Service Committees which had sprung up. It was formally agreed to change the constitution to include the word "District" again within the title but evidence is scarce as to the outcome. Certainly no minutes found bore the title of the Wellington District Social Services Committee. The same later applies in regard to the possible inclusion of "Regional" within the title. It was believed later in the decade that the insertion into the group's title of the word "Regional" would better reflect the Committee's role. This was particularly so in an era when a national body, the New Zealand Council of Social Services or NZCOSS (first mooted as the National Council of Social Services or NATCOSS) came into being. The demise of a number of the District Social Service Committees also fed input into the idea.

The Committee had previously been invited to forward the names of suitable qualified and experienced people to serve on the N.Z. or National Council of Social Services (NATCOSS or NZCOSS). In fact a national social services body had been mooted towards the end of the previous decade. But three elections and two changes of political ideologies had delayed its setting up.

NATCOSS (or NZCOSS) was a Government brainchild from the late 1960s. The concept involved building on the success of, and replicating the WSSC structure and role on a national level. Its job was to proffer expert advice on planned Government social welfare initiatives, to foster the founding of other regional and district social service committees/councils, and liaise widely with these and individual voluntary welfare groups throughout the country.

In a follow up address to the WSSC in March, 1976, Social Welfare Minister, the Hon Bert Walker, expressed his disappointment that the Wellington model had not been repeated to the same extent elsewhere across the country. Or, where it had several were either in decline or had already slipped into recess. As such he had supported the founding of a national social services organisation to fill the gap. He also saw it leading a much needed rationalisation and improved co-ordination of social welfare delivery mechanisms through the country.

A downstream impact was to be a more defined role for the WSSC. Indeed the WSSC's role and aims were constantly being re-determined as members periodically called into question just what is was the Committee was trying to achieve.

Often reviews were called during times of small attendances affecting progress on various projects and initiatives. Certainly attendances and membership commitment ebbed and flowed through both the 1970s and the following decade. As such they were commented upon in more than one Chairman's annual report over the period.

The newly formed NATCOSS or NZCOSS set out what it saw as key roles for regional and district social services councils in the future. These included: keeping the various social needs and their provision under constant review, particularly in regard to any gaps or deficiencies; developing appropriate social standards of service through provision of opportunities to enhance knowledge and skill; encouraging cooperation between groups engaged in similar fields of activity; dissemination of information on welfare matters eg new legislation; fostering public awareness of social issues; promoting opportunities for individuals to be involved in social service provision; surveying and researching the social welfare needs of their regions and districts; and promoting appropriate relationships within all facets of social welfare provision and providers.

In a somewhat veiled command the Council also sought the co-operation of regional and district councils to first channel any representations to central government through itself. Till then the WSSC had had considerable direct access to both Cabinet Ministers and/or their departmental officials. Undoubtedly subsequent and regular reviews of the organisation's structure, aims, and activities served to ensure that the membership remained aware of welfare related issues and needs and thus maintained its relevance.

Sometime during the decade the word "Committee" was replaced in the title with "Council." In 1972 it was still the Wellington Social Services Committee. By 1974 it was the Wellington Social Services Council. With a number of records missing for parts of 1972, 1973 and 1974, just when the change of title occurred proved hard to be determined. Yet another change that occurred in the 1970s was a split of meetings between an Executive Committee and full Committee/Council. This structure was retained through to following decades,

An elected Executive met early each month followed by a full Council meeting in the second half. Usually the latter event was the third Tuesday each month. It was a format that is not greatly dissimilar to what happens in 2013. A major difference from the new millenium being that both meetings occur separately at the same day each month and in the same venue. By 2013, the equivalent of the full Council (called the Network) met immediately after the conclusion of the still elected Executive. Network meetings were occasionally followed by special presentations and discussions on specialist issues.

For a short time meetings were quarterly. This resulted in considerable frustration and monthly meetings were resumed from 1972. Meeting venues through the decade alternated over the period with the majority being allocated between the Senior Club, Committee Room 2 in the Town Hall, and the Wesley Centre rooms. At the start of each year a programme was drawn up of invited guest speakers to talk about their organisation's work or specific Government or Departmental initiatives. Topics included a talk from Keith Evans of the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council, a Justice Department explanation about the work of Friends of the Court, and presentations on the proposed new Family Court structure and a new community service sentence.

As well, a Radio New Zealand representative spoke on the concept of Access radio; while just what was entailed in a number of new job creation schemes were spelled out from by a Labour Department official. Other topics included foster care, the Wellington Polytechnic's new social worker courses, what the 1979 International Year of the Child (IYC) would require from the WSSC, and marriage guidance services among other matters.

Special presentations were usually kept for full Committee/Council meetings. Attendances and responses to these were varied. Chairman Father Brian Sherry was sufficiently concerned at the wide variance of attending numbers and interest shown at Council meetings that he remarked on it in his 1979 annual report.

The WSSC went into the 1970s with 67 organisations as full members. Six government departments (Internal affairs, Justice, Social Welfare, Labour, Maori Affairs and Health) continued to participate. The Social Welfare Department was the outcome of a 1972 amalgamation between the former Social Security Department and the Child Welfare Division). The Wellington City Council was represented through its Community Services Group and Mayoral Relief Fund) while the Wellington Hospital Board, Lower Hutt City Council Community Services, the Wellington Regional Council, and Wainuiomata Council Community Services ensured a strong local body involvement.

The advent of the regional council concept caused considerable debate within WSSC meetings as to what the new body's role might be and its impact on the activities of the Committee.

Churches were represented by the Presbyterian Social Services Association, Catholic Social Services, the Baptist Friendship Centre, the Salvation Army, the City Mission, St Vincent de Paul, the Inner City Ministry, and Wesley Social Services. A central concern for the welfare of the city's elderly citizens was reflected through the involvement of four groups. These being the Wellington Jewish Centre for the Aged, the Wellington Pensioner and Beneficiaries Association, the Wellington Senior Club, and the Wellington Old People's Council.

Mothers' Helpers provided a domestic focus while family issues were the forte of Birthright, the Wellington Parents Centre, the Smith Family, the Wellington Foster Care Association, the Wellington Play Centre Association, the Maori Women's Welfare League, the emergent Womens Refuge (and also later the Wellington Rape Crisis Centre), Dr Barnados in NZ, the Family Planning Association, Solo Parents, Pregnancy Help, and the Adoption Association. Another previous member, the Society for the Protection of Home & Family, was in recess.

After Care, Busy Fingers, the Cancer Society, the Wellington Association for the Care of Deaf Children, Multiple Sclerosis, Stepping Stones, the Society for Alcoholism & Drug Dependence, the Richmond Fellowship, The NZ Foundation for the Blind, Craft & Care, the NZ Crippled Children's Association, the Hearing Association, the Rehabilitation League, the Wellington Society for the Deaf, the Wellington Co-ordination for the Disabled and the Society for the Intellectually Handicapped were there to see to the needs of the handicapped and general health issues.

The Wellington Branch of the Returned Services Association (RSA) and Patriotic Welfare League represented returned servicemen and women while youth matters were the main responsibility of the YMCA, the YWCA, Youthline, and Youth For Christ.

The membership list was rounded out by Red Cross, Prisoners Aid & Rehabilitation Service, Community Volunteers, the Wellington Volunteer Bureau, Pacifica, Wellington Polytechnic's community course, and the Pacific Islands Resource Centre. By the end of the decade the National Council of Women (NCW) was also a participant.

Many of the above organisations had been participating actively since the Committee's/Council's foundation in 1952 as the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC). Others were newcomers representing emerging social issues throughout the region. Illegal drug use and dependence had raised their head in the previous decade but were becoming an accelerating and widening problem. So too were youth related issues while growing numbers of Pacific and Asian families meant a need for a multicultural presence within the organisation.

Lastly Women's Refuge, the Rape Crisis Centre, Solo Parents, Pregnancy Help, Foster Care and the Family Planning Association reflected renewed emphasis on the needs of women and children in society. The last named represented a significant social shift in the 1970s towards a more permissive and sexually open society.

At the time the Social Welfare Department still provided secretarial support

WSSC did gain its share of media coverage with regular media contacts set up. As well, the constant parade of Cabinet Ministers (particularly the Ministers of Housing and Social Security), Opposition MPs, and city Mayors addressing Committee annual general meetings usually ensured their comments were also reported in the local and national press.

In her annual report for the year ended 30 September 1970, Chairwoman, Mrs Tiller, warned that the decade ahead while holding exciting prospects also foreshadowed many problems for welfare organisations. Some of these issues were already looming with few if any effective remedies in sight. Mrs Tiller, warned that community social welfare groups would need to review and change their policies, structures and practices to cope with new situations. She also reported one issue already manifesting itself was the difficulty for welfare providers to obtain both volunteers and qualified personnel in field work or in administration. By the end of the decade the international oil shocks' and in particular the country's response through car less days also impacted adversely on the availability of volunteers. As well, even salaried trained staff were restricted in their outreach work through this policy. Even so trained social workers remained thin on the ground while existing case loads were extraordinarily heavy. The 1971 annual report spoke of the Wellington Hospital's extra mural services being hampered by a lack of staff. One of the contributing factors was an acceleration more and more women staying in or returning to full time employment in industry, office work, and their former professions.

The matter of adequate housing for the aged was highlighted by Mrs Tiller as still the major social issue for the city.

38.

Her report noted with some concern the demise of the the Advisory Committee on the Care of the Aged which had been set up in the 1950s. This had been disbanded by the the Board of Health Committee on the Aged without consultation. The Chairwoman's report ended with a call for the WSSC to monitor carefully the Government's future actions together with those of its departments in respect to policies and programmes on behalf of the aged who had no union or (then) no political party or lobby group to see that their needs were adequately met.

So with the Chairwoman's words the decade opened.

The matter of a shortening supply of volunteers within the social services sector across the city was also becoming more acute. This led to considerable expending of time and energy exploring the possibility of a central bureau of volunteers providing a source of both field work and administration support on an as requested basis. Eventually both Volunteer and Secretarial Bureaus became a reality-for a time. The 1980s saw their demise. This was despite there being a clear need for both groups. A lack of support was largely the cause of their passing.

Yet another issue exercising the attentions of the WSSC through the 1970s was a growing volume of both male and female itinerants. These were people from outside the city coming in to find work who together with increasing numbers of the city's homeless required housing. The result was an intensive effort towards establishing a night shelter at least as a stop gap measure.

Leadership during this period fell to Miss Richards carrying over from the previous decade, Mr Wally Lake and from 1976, Miss Tiller of the Mother Helpers Association (1976), Mr David Nicholson (1977-78), and father Brian Sherry from Catholic Social Services (1979-81).

1971-80: The Decade in Detail

The decade started rather inauspiciously when the Committee was unable to find a replacement secretary within its own ranks. From the first years the Social Security Department had provided secretarial services to the now named Wellington Social Services Committee and later Council (WSSC). When the secretary of the time, Miss Judy Vowles, moved on from the Department during the decade's first year it was suggested that perhaps the Committee might prefer to appoint a replacement from within its own sources. But there were no takers. The Social Security Department then came to the rescue with another appointee. Initially assurances were given that the Department would organise secretarial support through the remainder of 1971 and beyond. However, early the following year the Department withdrew its offer citing increased pressure on its resources. Enter Mrs Norma Taylor

Most of 1971 involved only quarterly meetings of the full Committee (February, May, August, and November). But stand in Chairman, Mr Wally Lake (assuming now yet another key role with the organisation), put in his annual report that year that the AGM may like to look again at re-introducing monthly meetings. The Chairman also indicated that going forward it was time for a review of Committee membership. On the one hand there was a intermittent flow of applications for new organisations applying for membership. On the other some of the original signatories had either taken no part in Committee activities for some time and/or had lost all interest in doing so. It was decided the following year to canvass the official membership list to see which groups still wished to retain membership.

The decisions were being made in somewhat of a vacuum however. There was a belief that the Department of Social Welfare and the City Council's new Welfare Services Officer would assume much of the Committee's work. As such the WSSC's continued existence was in doubt. The 1972 May meeting left the matter over to the AGM of that year for a decision. In an almost bizarre moment and despite the cloud looming over the Committee's very future members agreed to progress a written constitution. This process had already been initiated and was to occupy members over much of the remainder of the year.

Two 1971 newcomers were Busy Fingers and the Inner City Ministry. Busy Fingers was a Newtown based group providing hospitality and recreation services to people otherwise confined to their homes. The Inner City Ministry represented the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches which undertook joint community welfare projects beyond the capacity of any one single member.

Accommodation for the needy and particularly Wellington's pensioners was close to crisis. The Wellington City Council (WCC) had provided a number of new pensioner flats and apartments for business couples. But just as in the previous twenty years the number fell well short of requirements. As well, restrictive conditions applying to what accommodation was available and the too low level of subsidy available to encourage more construction the issue looked like one which would be around for some time to come. Indeed, affordable housing needs remained one of Welcoss' major headaches still in 2013. In 1959 the subsidy on new residential care for the elderly was 100%.

By the end of 1971 the subsidy covered just 60% of the total capital cost of the most modest home for the aged. Trying to raise the remaining 40% from within the local community was proving just too much of a hurdle. An estimated subsidy of around \$9,000 a bed was required to encourage the building of more homes for the aged and Mr Wally Lake warned that the Government would be faced with a terrific sized social problem within 10 years.

Exacerbating the issue in Wellington involved numbers of people living in condemned buildings. An upside was the extension of co-operation between the Committee and the Wellington City Council with cases referred by Council officers to the Committee. The relationship intensified when the Council appointed an officer with fairly wide powers to work with existing welfare groups the Committee for the benefit of the wider community.

The extension of this working relationship between the Committee and the Council continued to evolve and grow over subsequent decades. By 2013 the City Council was Welcoss' predominate partner. By then it funded the costs of Welcoss activities including salaries of its officers and special project costs.

Unemployment began to gather pace as one of Wellington's emerging social problems. Initially Wellington's unemployed numbers remained relatively low over the year. But more people from outside the region wanting work coming into the capital placed additional pressure on the city's infrastructure. Particularly in respect of accommodation. As well local welfare voluntary and church agencies became active in supplementing state assistance to this group.

Wellington Hospital's extra mural or outreach services including district nursing, meals on wheels, laundry services, home aid, and outpatient treatment provided valuable relief to the needy while restricting inpatient population of hospitals to manageable levels. The value and reach of these extra mural services did become hampered over time with a shortage of trained and volunteer staff. Not surprisingly this caused considerable frustration among WSSC members in their efforts to advocate the delivery of adequate services.

An increasing involvement with the needs of the handicapped saw a WSSC sub-committee looking at the rehabilitation of handicapped people of all ages over the year. The sub-committee was due to report early in 1972. That year was also to see another key change within the central government sector. This was the heralded amalgamation of the Social Security Department and the Child Welfare Division into the Department of Social Welfare. There was a degree of anxiousness at to what might evolve from the amalgamation. Special concern centred around some vague promises of direct assistance to those voluntary organisations co-operating with the new body to improve the delivery of social services.

The City Council's appointment of a Community Services Officer saw the Committee seeking some further detail as to the position's role and duties and what, if any, was their involvement to be with the WSSC. Duties of the new City Council role included establishing community advice centres to provide information and referrals to enquirers; assisting in the co-ordination of existing welfare organisations; and encouraging and helping in developing new groups to meet specific needs and fill service gaps where these were seen to exist.

41.

The Council's initial appointee to the position was Mr David Robinson who became increasingly involved with WSSC activities. After moving on from his Council's position he led the Funding Sub-Committee and became its Chairman for 1985-86. He also often chaired regional meetings of District Social Services Councils. These included , local authority participation including that of elected councillors.

At this point it should be noted that records of meetings and correspondence over 1973 and 1974 appeared minimal. Minutes may have been mislaid or not filed with other historical records. Indeed, few items of correspondence were available for research for part of the decade. As such events in these years were unable to be covered in depth with any certainty. It is possible that the change of title from Committee to Council may have been made during this time. But this could not be verified. Material from 1976 was again available in greater abundance.

The 1973-74 annual report from Canon W. Arnold was somewhat negative when reviewing the year. He wrote that that attendance at meetings had been poor and spasmodic. Thus he did not believe that the Council had been operating as an effective forum. He believed that the Council had been a significant failure in coordinating social services for the city. He also found little success had been achieved in helping to establish other agencies where needs arose. His comments were presented in the presence of two local MPs, Ken Comber (National) and Gerald O'Brien (Labour). It also gained some local press coverage.

Arising from Canon Arnold's report the development of a new constitution occupied members' time over the following year. This had resulted in an Executive Committee of just six. The annual general meeting of that year ended with a presentation from Detective Sergeant Rangihika of the Wellington Drug Squad. The topic being the various varieties of drug being sold and the issues that Police faced in dealing with drug related crime.

A notice of motion to the AGM sought agreement for the WSSC to sponsor a voluntary committee to assist in re-housing of elderly citizens in Wellington. The committee once approved to operate over the following year would be provided access to professional legal, real estate and property valuation.

The accounts for the year showed a return of of \$312.25 from Directory sales against a printing cost of over \$1,000. The loss was offset to an extent by a City Council grant towards Directory costs of \$100. Income was also boosted by an \$8,000 lottery grant earmarked for the Senior Club. The year end balance was a healthy \$8,894.54.

The following year's annual meeting guests were the Minister of Social Welfare, the Hon H. King and again Wellington Central MP, Mr Ken Comber. Mr Comber was to return the following decade in a new guise. That of Wellington Mayor. Attendances at these event by various Cabinet Ministers were not uncommon for the time. In addition to the Minister of Social Welfare the Minister of Housing too had been present on more than one occasion. The Rt Hon Sir Arnold Nordmeyer too once addressed an annual meeting. But not in his capacity as Prime Minister. Mayors, Prime Ministers and Opposition Leaders of the day were invited to each AGM almost as of right. Sir Frank Kitts and his wife too were not completely unknown at WSSC AGMs.

Mr Comber's theme to the annual meeting focused on urban violence and a call for the public to better support the nation's enforcement agencies. The 1974-75 year highlights reported by retiring Chairman Mr Robert Allum included the setting up a steering committee to review the possibility of a Wellington Old People's Welfare Council.

At the 1975 annual general meeting in November that year the WSSC agreed to actively support and promote the setting up of a Wellington Old People's Welfare Council (WOPWC) as part of a national initiative. This was aimed at better coordinating appropriate responses to meeting the needs of the nation's elderly. But it did not formally come into being until September the following year (1976). The Right Hon. Sir John Marshall was the organisation's patron. At that time the new group also sought affiliation to the WSSC.

In May 1975 the Council was addressed by Health Department representative, Mr Peter Mackie, on a Cabinet White Paper on Health. The Paper included wide ranging changes for health infrastructure and delivery for the country. The changes included setting up new regional health authorities. The White Paper had already been discussed by the Council membership particularly in relation to widely expressed fears at the time that the Government appeared dead set on taking over voluntary agencies. Mr Mackie discounted that this was the case. But such was the impact of the Paper it had been a best seller in some regions and consequently was currently in rather short supply.

The White Paper's position on health services delivery was that communities acting through the State would have the prime responsibility for the health needs of their citizens. Mr Mackie confirmed that the Government's position was that it was very keen to ensure this is what was put in place. The remaining principles of the Paper (some in not untypical bureaucratised) were that lines of administrative control of health services should follow finance to its source; that health services should be organised so that their administrative districts should be capable of meeting the various health needs of their communities; that various components of the health service should be functionally integrated; and that any future development of health services need to be rationally planned. Mr Mackie explained that one intended outcome of the changes was for a completely integrated health service. But the biggest question was how to integrate the voluntary organisations into this concept while being able to retain their voluntary character. Voluntary organisations were part of a special consultative group tasked with achieving just this aim

Mr Mackie's role at the meeting was to outline just how the White Paper affected voluntary agencies working within the health service sector. Nine ways the White Paper envisaged for voluntary services were: demonstrating and pioneering new ideas including research; public health education; training health workers; input into the planning of Government health programmes; influencing future health related legislation; providing financial aid; and stimulating wider community participation in health programmes. Contracting out of specific services to appropriate voluntary agencies was also a likely outcome according to the speaker.

Yet another matter which occupied the attention of the Council in August 1975 was whether or not to proceed with a Wellington Old People's Welfare Committee. It was proceeded with and with the support and sponsorship of the WSSC

43.

In March in 1976 Social Welfare Minister, the Hon Bert Walker, addressed the WSSC on the role to be played by the new national social services coordinating body, the National (or New Zealand) Council of Social Services (NZCOSS). He invited nominations from the WSSC to be considered when the positions to comprise the NZCOSS Board were finalised. The NZCOSS Board was to comprise five members from voluntary welfare organisations, seven members representing a broad field of social welfare service activity including local authority those with experience, and six members representing Government Departments.

The Chairperson was to be appointed outside the above.

The Government's overall role for the new body was to avoid promoting sectional interests while representing a balance of gender, ethnicity, and experience. Its functions included: advising Ministers on the adequacy of existing welfare services and programmes; advising the Government as to what was needed to better co-ordinate social welfare services; identifying and reporting any gaps, identifying and recommend areas for social welfare research; promoting national co-ordination and co-operation in delivering social welfare services, liaising with various national bodies; stimulating the development of district and even regional councils of social services; encouraging co-ordination among local authority councils on social welfare related issues; and promoting minimum standards for social welfare facilities and services.

The Government stressed that while the new NATCOSS or NZCOSS was a Government initiative it was still expected to take a strongly independent stance in its advice.

In April that year the concept of a Volunteer Bureau was raised and discussed at the full Council meeting. The matter lay in somewhat of abeyance until November the following year when its possible need was again raised at full Council.

In May the question as to whether or not the WSSC should be district based to reflect the wider geographic representation of some WSSC members was raised. It was agreed to proceed with changing the constitution accordingly. But subsequent letter head or meeting minute titles did not reflect any addition of the word "District." Nor did the records for the period clarify the matter.

The December full WSSC meeting also established another sub-committee, the Family Sub-Committee. Its task was to provide input into yet another new Cabinet Paper on the Family. It was also now that the Senior Club opted to go it alone. One outcome was a shift of meeting venue to the Wellington City Council's Committee Room No 2 in the Town Hall. At that time the Senior Club also ended its formal affiliation to the WSSC. Its absence from WSSC membership was quickly filled however. In February 1997 Pregnancy Help sought and was granted membership. Two months later the next issue of the Social Services Directory became available at \$2 per copy. The slowness of its take-up led to a decision to try to get some local television coverage via one of the country's most popular television presenters of the day, Sharon Crosbie. Of more concern that month were rumours of a possible closure of St Helens Hospital. Clarification was sought and full public discussion demanded if this was to prove the case

A similar issue had arisen in July when the issue of whether regional based committees might better serve the welfare needs of the area was raised. However, WSSC members were more in favour of retaining local or District Committees (or Councils). By then only Wellington and Wainuiomata Committees were active. Thus it was felt that the WSSC was not in a position to assume a wider regional role.

There was some vigorous talk at the June 1977 meeting of the full Committee over its future. Some members took the position that the WSSC was not fulfilling its original functions. Some also believed that more formal relationships with the City Council were required and needed clarifying and formalising along with clarifying relationships between NZCOSS and the Lower Hutt COSS. Participation or the lack of it among some members was also raised. One member group advised the Executive that while it got good value from its membership it could not afford the \$5 annual fee. Rather than lose members the Committee agreed the Executive should have the discretion to waive annual fees on a case by case basis.

1977 ended on a positive note with the decision to no longer use the administrative support of the Department of Social Welfare. That the WSSC now was financially independent was a key factor in coming to this point.

The following year focused Committee attention on the announced re-organisation of Wellington's health services. The WSSC led the charge in public to ensure voluntary welfare agencies were represented on the various committees overseeing the re-organisation. After all it would be these bodies who would eventually have to carry the load (and consequences). The WSSC submission to the re-organising committee also stressed the need for whatever new structure evolved from the process it was vital that individual freedom of choice was retained. It was also during 1978 that WSSC came down on the side of supporting the setting up of a Volunteer Bureau. This followed a public meeting held to once again look at the need.

By now direct and active Government Department involvement in WSSC meetings and activities was on the wane. But the group was still invited to make submission of key Government policies and new programmes. A 1979 call for submissions on a planned new community service sentence being one example. But active central government representation at WSSC meetings continued to drop off. This was of sufficient concern to some members that previous departmental members were to be written to seeking continuing participation and more regular attendance. After all, it was said the former WDWC had arisen in 1952 largely through the initiative and support of the Social Security Department. In the first two decades of its existence the Committee had been a more than useful sounding board for Government welfare, housing and health initiatives. The Committee too had not been backward on coming forward to lobby hard for funds and facilities to support Wellington's needs in those three areas. Adequate village type housing for the elderly managed under appropriate and standardised regulations was one such area of activity over the Committee's first two decades. It was reported to the 1978 annual meeting that the principles of the welfare state as originally promulgated, and which were once the envy of the western world, were being eroded. It was put that the WSSC and local authority councils should become the focal points of Government Departments to ensure regional welfare, housing and health needs continued to be met.

45.

Increasing cross cultural diversity was emerging in New Zealand at the time largely through increased Pacific Island migration here. The trend was highlighted with recognition by the WSSC to do more in the years ahead to foster greater cross cultural understanding.

The year ended with a sub- committee formed to manage WSSC activities in regard to the International Year of the Child (IYC). This was a major world wide exercise which loomed over the following 12 months. By this time WSSC membership reflected a number of organisations with a particular focus on children's needs. As such it was certain, therefore, that the Committee would not go into what looked to be a very busy year totally blind or without the capacity to respond.

With the end of the decade clearly in sight the emphasis on IYC activities was joined by the perceived need to get good quality social planning incorporated in future town and country planning decisions. The latter item was to take increasing importance by the end of the decade and through the early 1980s.

The Funding Sub-Committee was getting numerous complaints that new central government funding schemes to support local voluntary welfare agencies were often tied up in huge amounts of red tape. This not only delayed application approvals, it also left many groups confused as to whether they even qualified or left not understanding just what the various funding qualifying criteria was. That the Government was being accused of passing on more and more of its responsibilities in social welfare provision to voluntary agencies with less funding in real terms was causing increasing frustration among voluntary agencies throughout the city. It was a claim that many voluntary agencies still echoed in 2012 and 2013.

With so much work and the extent of issues being faced some WSSC members promoted taking a more public activist stance on current issues.

Work on forming the Volunteer Bureau had proceeded over the 1978-79 year. It opened for business in February 1979. In April it was reported that more and more volunteers were coming forward to offer their time, skills, and knowledge. A pamphlet promoting the value of volunteering and how to do so had also been prepared by then.

Chairman, Father Brian Sherry referred in his annual 1978-79 report as being a most frustrating year. This even though the Acting Chairperson of NZCOSS, Miss Avery Jack assured the WSSC in November that district based social services committees and councils were just as badly needed as they ever were. She said that these provided an invaluable pool of ability and good will which would be otherwise impossible to tap into. She also affirmed that they provided a source of good expertise to local authorities in regard to planning for their city's, town's, district's and/or county's social needs.

During a September 1979 review of its own effectiveness, one WSS Council working group was openly critical of its own achievements. At least those over the previous year or so. After 25 years from its launch date and while its original purpose was still desired the working group reported that Council activities were currently suffering from poor attendances, a lack of coordination, and failure to meet original aims.

1979 had proved additionally busy with the city's voluntary agencies, or at least those with form of involvement with children, undertaking extensive activities to underpin the International year of the Child (IYC).

New Zealand was free of revolution, war, and famine. Poverty then was not measured (or acknowledged) in the same degree as in many overseas countries. Nevertheless, the plight and rights of children were vigorously taken up in this country. Certainly family violence in New Zealand and its impact on children was beginning a phase of increased reporting. Two downstream outcomes (albeit not immediately) of the IYC was the establishment of a Children's Commissioner and later a Families Commission. Pre-school education was overhauled and made more easily accessible while corporal punishment in schools was outlawed as was smacking of children by parents. In 1993, the Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). Thus it was disturbing when just over 33 years after the IYC the Dominion Evening Post newspaper reported that over the past two decades successive governments had been tardy in enshrining UNRCROC principles in our country's legislation. The newspaper claimed in March 2013 that the United Nation's latest report to the New Zealand Government on children's and family issues was forced to use terms such as regret, disappointment, inequalities and discrimination when assessing the nation's response in implementing the terms of the Charter.

In 1980, and with the successes of IYC actions now in the immediate past, what might the next decade bring was not something far from the minds of Council members. However, before the first full year of the new decade could be considered in greater detail the Council sat to consider a funding problem. The issue was not specifically in regard to itself. But more in respect to increasing numbers of voluntary welfare agencies having to resort more and more to less central government sources of funds. In addition they were having to compete with each other for what was available within the Wellington Community. More and more groups were looking towards lottery allocations as their sole resource to sustain their activities.

An undated funding paper considered around that time by the Council was critical of a Government which was more and more passing on social welfare service delivery to voluntary agencies. And this without additional resource provision to enable them to do so effectively. As it was, the Council had to deal with a rising volume of complaints about the amount of red tape attached to what central government funding was available. Many voluntary groups had become very frustrated and angry with centrally based funding programmes which they could not access to any timely degree because of red tape. Others were so confused by the application criteria that they did not know whether or not they even qualified in some instances.

One impact of a lessening of central government involvement in the social services sector saw the Wellington City Council establishing a Community Services Support Group in April 1980. Its role was to assist the Council get a better understanding of, better plan for, and take heed of various future community welfare requirements. The group's mandate also included recreational needs. Helping voluntary welfare agencies and groups get access to funding to maintain adequate service delivery had been an issue throughout the term of the original WDWC and then the Council.

Now the issue was becoming markedly acute. 1980, however, started off with an address by Mr Robert Howell of the Wellington Hospital Board. With a new and reorganised regime to be shortly in place he spoke about gaps his Board was facing in information and services. He also raised the issue about what services were being looked at to be retained in hospitals against those which could be better provided from within the wider community. A March workshop to look at how the new regime would affect the Wellington area was organised by the the consultation body the Wellington Health Services Advisory Committee. The WSSC urged members involved in health services to attend and have their say. Subsequent submissions from WSSC urged more domiciliary services and funding for community half way houses and preventative services.

Early in the year WSSC members also discussed draft suggestions on improving the quality of full Council meetings. These were drawn up by Mr Garth Baker who was a member of the Executive Committee. He proposed limiting administrative matters at general meetings of the Council. These he believed were better left to Executive meetings, rather than as formal business meetings in order to generate greater social interaction; allowing time for members to present on activities of their own particular organisations (something that became provided for during the decade leading up to the 60th anniversary of the organisation at Network meetings); and organising some meetings around a specific theme.

Mr Baker also proposed: sending information sheets to members prior to meetings to restrict the amount of time taken up with information exchanges; and have meetings run as discussions. Mr Baker believed that Council meetings should provide the interface for agencies where their representatives could come together to share information and get to know each other rather than be formal coordination points.

March 1980 saw the launch of a Chairperson's newsletter to members. It initially covered various items the Chairperson believed might be of interest to members and which would also help save meeting time. City Council and/or Volunteer Bureau assistance in producing this was sought. Early in the year Council members also considered changes in meeting formats. Suggestions looked at post meeting socialising over a cup of tea, conducting meetings on a much less formal basis, and lunch time meetings with guest speakers in attendance.

It was now too that members began to note an even greater fall off in government department participation. Consequently it was determined that these be contacted and asked to ensure their ongoing involvement in Council activities. As it was current membership was facing increasing volumes of work. One matter in particular was the need to disseminate information to members. A Labour Department Temporary Employment Programme (TEP) worker was then sought to ease a lot of the administrative burden.

By 1980 the Volunteer Bureau was already seeking new premises while at the same time reporting difficulties in obtaining volunteer drivers for various voluntary agencies needing them. They were getting plenty of requests but few responses. The availability of space in the Pacific Islands Resource Centre in Willis Street were being considered as an alternative operating venue. Two rooms were being considered and the Bureau was willing to share its equipment with other agencies.

By now the Council had also considered proposals around the new non-custodial community service sentence. Council members believed further investigation was needed into the concept before it was finalised and implemented under the justice system. WSSC suggested to the Minister of Justice that he form a task force to examine the practical aspects of the proposal. The Council believed that any such task force should comprise Justice Department officials, local body representatives and voluntary agencies.

May 1980 also involved a presentation to the full Council on social planning concepts. WSSC member David Robinson was one of three presenters. Maria McKinley of the Department of Social Welfare and Mike Smith of Inner City Ministry were the others. It was after their presentation that the Council agreed to draw up terms of reference for a working party to consider the role of WSSC on the issue of social planning in Wellington. Early work saw a need to prepare a register of services and development of ways to achieve social planning input into the City's district scheme; and also ways to have them put into practice. Resultant TEP placements also assisted in this particular task.

In May representatives of social service groups in Lower and Upper Hutt Cities, Wainuiomata, Porirua and Kapiti shared their own current positions with WSSC. Issues raised included coordinated social planning in district schemes and the rising number of unemployed in the region. Upper Hutt social service coordination operated under the wing of the Hutt City Council's Community Services Support Group. Upper Hutt reported that most local social service needs were being met by local organisations and people with most related to meeting health needs. In Lower Hutt the biggest need was the start of developing social services in the city's suburbs where there was, currently, a distinct lack. Additionally, the Lower Hutt Council of Social Services met only every two to three months. But it did have a 120 strong membership. Activities included regular Saturday morning seminars on a variety of relevant issues and topics. They were being supported by the local City Council with meeting space and administrative support.

On the other side of the geographical divide, Porirua City's social welfare coordinating focus was through the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). But that organisation had little input into social policy planning and development. Kapiti reported that some 30 organisations were affiliated to its Council of Social Services while the local Borough Council also maintained a social services centre. Wainuiomata was currently experiencing the impact of worsening economic conditions with many social service provider groups already closed down or considering doing so. The Wainuiomata Social Services Council too was under difficulties. But it opted to try and keep going, at least in the mean time.

As the matter of social planning took root the WSSC sponsored an October workshop that year. Again various regional social service coordinating groups would be invited to participate along with local body representative. NZCOSS was also notified of the event while local press coverage was also assured. Advertising expenses were also incurred promoting the workshop. Already the Wellington City Council's Community Services Officer had been asked to prepare appropriate social planning guidelines incorporation into future city planning guidelines.

The City Council was also meeting with groups with a focus on disabled persons' care in regard to housing needs for these.

Thirty-seven attendees participated in the half day workshop including an Evening Post reporter. Organisers were a little disappointed in the attendance given the publicity leading up to the occasion. Nevertheless, input was willing and a lot of valuable feedback gained. David Robinson compiled a full report on the workshop which went to a subsequent WSSC meeting. It had been previously determined that after the workshop some body independent of the City Council would be required to undertake a watching brief on how social planning was incorporated into city planning and social service delivery. It was agreed that a sub-committee of the WSSC was best placed to take that task on. The sub committee was also mandated to liaise directly with the City Planning Department and other relevant agencies as required.

As the scope of the social planning exercise broadened WSSC convened a wider representative membership to the sub-committee. Funding for a full time coordinator to support the work of the group was sought through the Lottery Board and Social Science Research Council. Additionally by now the value of periodic regional meetings had become apparent. These were hosted by WSSC and were attended by representatives from various district social service councils and local authorities. Sometimes these included attendances from elected local authority councillors.

Social planning too was placed on NZCOSS' November National Chairpersons' meeting. These chairpersons' gatherings under the auspices of NZCOSS had been proceeding for some time now with a range of issues discussed and reported on.

As 1980's end drew nearer the Housing Sub-Committee (by now titled an interest group) was considering disbanding having largely completed its narrower role. But, with 1981 being an election year and the current National Government's thinnish majority under threat it was believed the sub-committee should remain active in exploring and raising issues related to housing needs for elderly and disabled persons. What the WSSC was unaware of was a looming crisis which exploded in mid 1981. It was an event which was to divide the nation and put local housing needs well into the shade, for a while anyway.

5

1981-90

SPRINGBOK RUGBY TOUR, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, THE NZ PARTY, ROGERNOMICS, DEREGULATION, YUPPIES AND ALL THAT JAZZ

The arrival of the South African rugby side in mid 1981 proved the catalyst which, for a time at least, stripped away the country's thin veneer of tolerance. It was an event which over shadowed any chance of the WSSC Housing Sub-Committee keeping local and central government authorities on their toes in regard to housing needs.

While South African sport was by then widely racially integrated world protest against apartheid had shifted to the regime as a whole. Racially integrated sporting sides were no longer the benchmark for international acceptance. Only the complete dismantling of its now reviled political system would see a fully open South African nation accepted on the world stage once more.

The New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) had been unrepentant in insisting the invitation to the Springbok team to tour the country go ahead. Parliamentary debates on the issue had been vigorous to say the least. The basis of these was built around opposition party pressure for the Government to step in and stop the tour proceeding. The Government would not. Even though some of its members were personally against the tour going ahead.

The Springboks arrived under massive street anti-tour protests. The second game, against a strong Waikato side (the holders of rugby supremacy then, the Ranfurly Shield) was abandoned following a pitch invasion by the protestors. Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon at that point made the issue one of law and order. The country was divided. There was some similarity with the American Civil War of the 1860s with families deeply divided supporting and even fighting for opposing sides. The same was the case for a few hot tempered months in 1981. No bullets were fired. But just about everything else was. Remaining tour games were played inside barriers of barbed wire and heavily manned gates at the venues. From time to time teams were even quartered under the grandstands they were to play in front of.

There were violent clashes in the streets. Police and protestors wore hard hats or helmets and shields. There was also some evidence that parties on both sides sought to settle a few differences. Particularly when Police riot squads faced off against protesting gang members. Many other New Zealanders were caught in the middle. Some members of families joined protest marches. Others bought tickets to the matches. There was also an urban verses rural split. Protestors were less tolerated in rural areas where rugby was the bastion of community life. At times police actions were even focused on keeping rugby supporters away from the protestors.

Yet once the tour concluded animosities were locked quickly away once more. Rugby loving protestors again shared benches at rugby games with tour supporters and the nation breathed a sigh of relief. The tour probably assisted Rob's Mob to regain the Treasury benches at the end of the year. But only just. Mid year polls had predicted a defeat for the National Government. But it held on by its finger nails with the support of its rural hinterland.

This was something that some sideline commentators put down to the impact of the rugby tour. The Springbok rugby tour of 1981 in taking, and holding the attention of the New Zealand public for much of the year pushed the Russian invasion of Afghanistan the year before well into the background. But that particular conflict was to last some nine years and have its own repercussions for this country a little over 20 years later.

On the home front in 1981 the National Government's majority was a narrow one. It was made even thinner by some dissension within the Government's own ranks. The support of three third parliamentary party Social Creditors was required to steer through legislation enabling the building of a hydro dam on the Clyde River. There were also those within the National Party who favoured a different economic direction than that slavishly followed by a dogmatic and autocratic Minister of Finance who also happened to be the Prime Minister. One Cabinet Minister (the Hon Derek Quigley) was dismissed after a speech to the Young Nationals advocating an alternative economic approach for the country. Sir Robert himself had already been lucky to survive an attempted coup by his colleagues. Only the unwillingness of preferred candidate Sir Brian Tallboys to take the reins offered him by the dissenters prevented a change at the top. Even so two backbenchers, Marilyn Waring and Mike Minogue, several times threatened to remove their support.

Not all the news was bad on the political front. The Freedom of Information Act became a reality before a change of government in 1984. So too did greater protection for female spouses and partners in relationship break ups. Enabling legislation for this came about through increases in family separations over the previous decade. Growth in both the incidence and reporting of domestic violence had also become an issue by the start of the 1980s. New support groups for battered wives and female partners won over all political factions within Parliament's walls. Two organisations supporting victims of domestic violence including rape within relationships were the Women's Refuge and Rape Crisis. Both had emerged the previous decade. And both were involved with the WSSC while gaining a growing public profile over this and following decades.

With the national economy teetering on the brink in the first three years or so in the decade (although the public were not fully aware just how close to the brink the country was at the time) the Government introduced a price and wage freeze. Some prices still rose over the time of the freeze which ended only with the arrival of a Labour Government under David Lange in 1984. By then inflation was well into double figures. As well would be home buyers faced a shortage of loan money. No financial institution seemed willing to lend at that time. By mid 1984 Sir Robert Muldoon was at his wits end. Even though an election was looming in November he opted to go early albeit reportedly while under the influence of an external stimulus taken earlier on the day of his decision. The polls were dead set against a National survival and so it proved. National's downfall was assisted by the emergence of a new political party under the leadership of straight talking property magnate, Sir Bob Jones. His new party was called the New Zealand Party. This political newcomer was a political equivalent of a tsunami. The leader's manifesto was based firmly on the need for free market economic reforms. It captured many of the traditional ideological adherents of the National Party and thus weakened Sir Robert Muldoon's government even further.

In the months leading up to the election the capital was rocked, literally, with a suitcase bomb explosion at Trades Hall killing unionist Ernie Abbot and his dog. Twenty years later, the crime remained unsolved.

The transition of party and ideology at the helm of government was not to prove an easy one. It was quickly found the nation was on the precipice of economic insolvency. Enter the new Finance Minister, Roger Douglas, and a new economic dawn. It was a dawn which pushed the country back from the insolvency cliff edge. But it came at a cost. Particularly for the public service and many of its employees. Under Labour's new economic reform programmes financial deregulation was undertaken as an initial step along with the floating of the dollar against other world currencies. There was an across the board 10% wage and salary rise and import subsidies were removed. The generous farming subsidies that had operated for many years also disappeared at the stroke of a pen. Their removal generated nation wide anger among farming families. The result was one of the biggest protest demonstrations ever seen in Wellington. The protest also included fly pasts by numerous topdressing planes. As well, existing Labour Department job schemes were scrapped and a three day conference in Parliament Buildings was called to set out directions for ongoing economic reform. The conference was an inclusive one involving representatives from all economic sectors. Openness and inclusiveness seemed the byword of the Lange Government and there were major conferences going on for months. These sought input from all sectors of the community on a wide range of issues and interests. Before launching its economic programme the Government laid bare its "books" for public scrutiny to show just how badly the country had been managed for the previous three years.

With all the changes came a new tax. This was the goods and services tax or GST. It was first set at 10 per cent on all retail purchases. It was subsequently raised to 12.5% in a later era. A number of state departments became state owned enterprises (SOEs). These operated under appointed boards with mandates to operate on private business lines and to return good returns to Government coffers.

A number of SOEs were also split into smaller units. One such was old Post & Telegraph Department. This was split into Telecom, New Zealand Post, and Post Bank (later sold to the ANZ Bank). Other SOEs evolved from New Zealand Railways (NZ Rail), Air New Zealand, and the Ministry of Energy (Electricorp and Coal Corp). The Ministry of Works was targeted to be split and prepared for sale (it was split up into Works Consultancy and Works Construction though the sale of the two groups did not proceed until the end of the 1990s). State businesses that were sold included the State Insurance Office, the Bank of New Zealand, Government Life Insurance and eventually New Zealand Rail.

The momentum of change increased. New government departments were set up such as the Departments of Conservation and the Environment. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) also became two separate identities. Along with the changes came massive public service redundancies. The old adage of a job in the public service meaning having a job for life vanished almost overnight. It has never returned. Nor have cardigans, shorts and work socks. New professionalism requirements included stricter dress codes under new management structures. Both were applied throughout all levels of the public service. Suits and corporate wardrobes became the new public service fad.

Individual employment packages for top managers included cars and car parks and other perks for the first time. After the return of Labour following the 1987 General Election the education sector got its own massive shakeup with education boards closed down and schools placed on a business footing guided by locally elected boards of trustees. These were responsible for the application of central government funding including staffing and salaries.

Labour was out New Zealand Partying the New Zealand Party. Labour leader, David Lange, was vocal in his agreement with Rogernomics as the Government's programme came to be known. New Zealand Party Leader Bob Jones applauded from the sidelines at the new Government's economic direction. Consequently the New Zealand Party melted quietly away having served its brief but major role as a catalyst of political change.

Despite all the major structural changes taking place total unemployment figures dropped. A new way of recording and reporting unemployment statistics was adopted. But this was not a case of attempting to hide the real picture. Indeed, the Government's economic forecasters were predicting higher rates. Yet the numbers kept coming down from their pre-election double figures.

Despite lessening unemployment, New Zealand's provincial economies did not do well under the new economic regime. Hawkes Bay, Mid and South Canterbury and other rural economies were hit hard. Jobless numbers and crime statistics in the regions accelerated upwards. People moved to the bigger centres, traditional industries struggled to survive, and retailers closed their doors. It took years for regional economies to recover. Certainly by the end of the 1980s there was only minimum indication that adjustments made were yet successful. History now records that by the year 2000 many provincial regions were again buoyant and even thriving in some instances.

The easing of tight financial controls in the 1980s fostered a wave of new business moguls. Investment moved away from traditional options into business entrepreneurship and the share market. Private corporate jets flew New Zealand's skies. Restaurants did roaring mid week lunch time trade and new careers took off. Money was there to burn and was. The era of the "Yuppie" had arrived. So to had the start of an increasing gap between the country's most and least wealthy. It is a gap that by 2013 still existed if not widening further.

The Government instigated a Ministerial task Force on Social Welfare and Income Maintenance which canvassed views of individuals and organisations nationwide. Its work fed into a much trumpeted Royal Commission on Social Policy headed by Appeal Court Judge Sir Ivor Richardson. The Commission was to look into the extent to which current social policy met the needs of all New Zealanders in respect of welfare, housing, education, health, and employment. Other Commission members included: former Executive Officer of the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations and Wellington Hospital Board Chair, Marion Bruce; Palmerston North psychiatrist, Mason Durie; Former Wellington City Councillor and Public Service Association officer, Ros Noonan; and Canterbury University Student Counsellor, Ann Ballin. The Commission was the brain child of the Prime Minister and fitted snugly within the parameters of a traditional Labour Government which had been out of office for a long time. However, this was not a traditional Labour Government. The contents of the Commission's voluminous report did not sit well with "Rogernomics."

54.

The report was fated to be labelled as one of the country's largest and most expensive door stops.

The good times couldn't last. And they didn't.

World markets plummeted at the end of 1987. Corporate jets were grounded and many of the new entrepreneurial businesses floundered. People lost millions of dollars. Jobs went to the wall and food queues lengthened. With firm national leadership required David Lange's Labour Government responded by going into meltdown mode.

The Prime Minister sought a respite from the Rogernomics free market tidal wave. Its founder, Roger Douglas backed by Treasury, believed its speed should be increased. The Beehive became a battlefield. Guerilla warfare broke out between the “wets” (those who supported the new directions) and the “drys” (those who supported the Prime Minister). Ministers were sacked. Others resigned in support of those who had been dismissed. The Prime Minister himself also stepped down. But the political merry go round continued. Two further Labour Prime Ministers took office before the 1990 election (Geoffrey, later Sir Geoffrey, Palmer and Mike Moore) before the country cried enough and elected a National Government in a 1990 landslide. But the change of national leadership was not before some of the larger Government monoliths were broken up into small ministries and new Government Owned Enterprises. One affected was the former Transport Ministry. This was broken up into agencies to provide overall transport policy advice together with separate agencies to see to the country's land transport, sea and air transport needs. The Justice Department's Courts and Corrections Divisions too were separated from its former parent.

Race relations took turns for both the better and the worse during the 1980s. State Owned Enterprise legislation enshrined Waitangi Treaty provisions. The move enabled Maori Iwi the opportunity to gain some profit share and compensation at last for loss of lands and assets during early colonial times and past grievances. However, Police led “dawn raids” particularly in Auckland, to nab potential illegal Pacific Island immigrants did not go down well at all. Settlement of Maori grievances and claims together with race relations in general began to take centre stage. And with claims still in abeyance and two Maori political parties represented in Parliament today it continues to do so.

Another significant social phenomenon of the period was the legalisation of same sex relationships between people over the age of 16 years. Like the Springbok Tour of several years ago the issue was divisive. Both pro and anti protests were loud and angry. Petitions for and against were gathered and presented to the promoter of the legalising legislation, Wellington Central Labour MP, Fran Wilde. The MP was vilified by the opponents of the move and deified by those in support. Ms Wilde prevailed and went on to a Ministerial post and subsequently celebrated considerable success as Wellington's Mayor and Chairperson of the Westpac Stadium Trust. As as 2013 she had by then been also Chairperson of the Wellington Regional Council for some years. She had also been a leading light over 2012-013 in trying to achieve major local authority structural reform for the whole region.

The 10 years from 1981 to 1990 could be said to be among the country's most traumatic ever. New television comedies such as *Yes Minister* and *Fawlty Towers* did help to put the political scene into some perspective. Yet even these popular shows could not calm the turmoil. Deregulation did ease overseas travel for many. New motor vehicles became more plentiful and cheap Japanese imported cars became increasingly available and popular.

Rugby's turmoil in 1981 was soccer and cricket's gain. New Zealand won through to its first World Football Cup tournament. The nation was agog when the All Whites even scored a goal against Scotland. The cricket world went through a big renewal with Australia's annual one day tri-series over a number of years. Glenn Turner, Richard Hadlee, John Reid, Lance Cairns, Jeremy Coney, John Wright, Ewen Chatfield, John Bracewell, Martin Crowe, and Bruce Edgar formed the basis of a very, very good Kiwi cricket team.

The heroics of Lance Cairns with one big hitting 50 over innings against Australia had kids lining up to play for local clubs in the thousands. As well, the New Zealand test team gave as good as they got against the best in the world for the best part of two successive decades.

Even rugby by the end of the decade had assumed its previous dominance in the hearts of Kiwi fans. This was particularly so in 1987 when the All Blacks took the inaugural Rugby World Cup trophy played out on New Zealand shores. Games also played live to viewing audiences following a more enlightened NZRFU approach to televising of major rugby matches. Finally, Wellington's skyline changed dramatically in the 1980s. New taller tower blocks gave the capital a distinct international metropolis appearance than before. Even if city office bound workers had to continually dodge around street barriers as old icons like the Barretts, Grand, Oaks, Carlton, and Midland Hotels made way for more modern structures and facilities. Even Kirkcaldie & Stains became largely a facade with two towers stretching upwards to the sky from its midst.

The arrival of the personal computer in the form of desk top appliances was a relatively quiet if exciting one. Few could see ahead just how huge an impact that personal computers were going to have on our society and culture. For much of the 1980s and even the early 1990s office typing pools remained the production line for office output. Typewriters too were to hold their place for a year or two yet. By the mid 1990s every office worker was using a desktop. Pagers were replaced by cell phones albeit quite large and cumbersome ones. By the new millenium the internet and laptop had arrived and cellphones too had become personal computers with the capacity to video events, take photos, and access the internet.

1981-90: Summary

The 1980s saw a number of major changes in social service funding and delivery. These were centrally directed by the wide sweeping broom of a Labour Government under the leadership of lawyer David Lange. The broom was wielded by a cabal of committed financial and social reformers and underpinned by a range of free market philosophies. Not since 1960 had Labour held the Treasury benches. And the new Government was hell bent on making hay while the sun shone. Changes included: proposals floated and implemented for new area health boards; a move in the health sector to make the chronically ill the main priority; separating health needs away from housing needs; the demise of a number of previous job creation schemes which voluntary agencies had made use of in the past to enhance service delivery or provide back office support; the launch of LOTTO, (with fund distribution staying with a Lottery Board structure); A Ministerial Task Force to review the country's entire system of social welfare support; a restructuring of the New Zealand education system under a business model; and a new regional approach to allocating Government grants and subsidies through appointed Community Organisation Grants Scheme allocation committees.

Most core central government services, including those with previous close relationships with the WSSC, provided under the former departmental system were also impacted by structural and service reviews. Even the new goods and services tax (GST) regime would have an impact on voluntary organisations operating at a level of over \$24,000 per year. That meant these groups needed to register for, and be subject to, the tax new regime.

At one point the WSSC sought and received a presentation from the Inland Revenue Department to explain the impact of the new goods and services tax (GST) for voluntary agencies. The Council also brought together Department of Social Welfare and Health Ministry officials to try and get some clarification of responsibility boundaries on and hopefully some future commitment to resolving the city's ongoing housing issues.

One certain outcome of the changes appeared to be a strong likelihood of community based voluntary social service agencies having to do a lot more with a lot less. So what was new??? More and more communities were being asked to pick up the workload (and the tab) for those in need or without. A former WSSC Chairman, Father Philip Sherry, at one time expressed his belief that New Zealand's social welfare state no longer existed in the form that evolved in the 1930s and 1940s. This was spelled out clearly in 1986 when Internal affairs Minister, Dr Peter Tapsell, spoke with Welcoss Executive members as to the effect of the new Lotto and its distribution of profits, ongoing funding to meet the costs of local voluntary welfare groups, and the future of the Local recreation and Development Fund. Dr Tapsell said that in future communities would need to be more self sufficient and less reliant on Government hand outs. He said that the work of the Royal Commission on Social Policy was likely to lead to a cut back in Government welfare services while the Local Recreation and Development Fund was primed for axing.

The 1980s also saw further waxing and waning of WSSC support. This led to a number of reviews on structure and meeting format through the decade. Member groups and other social service agencies were surveyed as to what might attract greater attendance and more constant participation.

In March 1984 the WSSC faced extinction. With no Chairperson or Secretary in office it was formally moved that the Council go into temporary recess. Wiser heads prevailed. The decision was deferred and the following month it was determined that it would be business as usual. Some amendments to meeting formats were made. It had been also proposed that separate Executive and full Council meetings be scrapped. It was suggested that instead there be one meeting each month with a business session at the start which would not be restricted only to elected Executive members. This would be followed by the Council meeting proper. It was an approach which is very much like that which operated at the time of writing (2013). Membership was also opened up to individual members (at a reduced cost) and the constitution amended to reflect the change.

Special sub-committees still operated through the decade and were added to or closed down as needed. At one point the term interest group replaced the sub-committee title. The long running Home Help Sub-Committee (or Interest Group) was one group it was felt had done all it could and its work was concluded. At one point the group expressed some frustration with the Department of Social Welfare's laxity in responding to its advocacy on behalf of those needing housing. The sub-committee was also perplexed over the prevarication between health and welfare authorities regarding their specific responsibilities in housing matters.

One new interest group started up was the Funding Sub-Committee (or Interest Group). The Funding Group evolved in response to a combination of a lessening of funding and increased competition for what there was available from either central or local government, from Trusts, or from within the community. For instance, the Labour Department re-prioritised its approach to unemployment by declaring its role was to put people into permanent jobs not funding temporary or short term voluntary roles with local agencies.

One of the Funding Group's first tasks was to survey the city's various agencies as to how they funded their activities. The response was mixed. Some agencies were not well disposed to giving out too much information in case other agencies became competitors for their own particular funding. The group did run seminars and researched various funding sources in order to help WSSC members fund their work. Such was the impact of the group's work that two of its members (David Robinson and Sue Driver) were subsequently employed by the New Zealand Planning Council to undertake similar work on a national basis.

WSSC's Home Help Interest Group was not the only casualty from changing times. In the previous decade the WSSC established both Volunteer and Secretarial Bureaus to support the needs of the City's individual social service agencies. The Volunteer Bureau's main task was to attract and place willing volunteers with agencies requiring just such assistance. This was not unlike the later formed Volunteer Wellington's role. Over time the need for a pool of volunteer workers had been clearly established. A number of agencies had previously been well resourced for volunteers from housewives. However, economic pressures and social changes meant that many of these were now re-entering the permanent workforce or staying in work longer. The Volunteer Bureau looked like a concept whose time had come. After a stuttering start it reported a steady flow of volunteers coming forward to give their time. Many were students on vacation. But over a short period of time the stuttering came back. Support dropped away and the Bureau folded.

The life of the Volunteer Bureau was mirrored to a great extent by the Secretarial Bureau. This was established to provide a centrally based source of administrative and secretarial support to, in particular, smaller social service agencies without the funding or person power resource to do these tasks effectively. User groups would support the Bureau through a small annual fee while grants and subsidies would support Bureau staff and rental costs. Again through lack of support and changes to funding schemes the service foundered and eventually beached.

By this time the WSSC had greater representation from, and more direct relationships with the Wellington City Council than with central government. New Social Welfare Minister the Hon. Ann Hercus, did address one of the regional meetings of District Social Service Councils. In addition access to one or other of the Select Committee considering a piece of new legislation was also enabled on one or two occasions. Several City Councillors (and sometimes Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt or Wellington Regional Councillors) were often in attendance at WSSC and Regional District Social Council meetings. Wellington City Council officers too were becoming increasingly active in WSSC projects. Work on establishing an inner city creche and centralising voluntary social service activities in one building being two cases in point.

When long serving City Councillor, Mrs Betty Campbell, eventually retired her long involvement in, and vigorous support for, WSSC activities were widely applauded and complimented.

The end of 1985 also saw the end of founding member, Wally Lake's involvement in the organisation. And this after 33 years of being one of the WSSC's most hard working, valuable, and valued, work horses. His workload had included roles as Secretary (while with the Department of Social Security) and also for a time as Chairman. Mr Lake became synonymous in the early years of WDWC with the putting together and overseeing the compilation, printing, sale and distribution of the Social Services Directory. The Directory was one of the WDWC's first major projects and at the time of Mr Lake's retirement it was still being regularly updated, promoted and sold. After leaving the Department of Social Security Mr Lake worked with the local health authority before heading Presbyterian Social Services while still retaining his role within WDWC and later the WSSC. In an audio taped interview with former WSSC Secretary Maria Phelan in 1999 Mr Lake recounted the early years of the then WDWC. He described its beginnings as a purely central government initiative for each large urban district in the country. The concept was to set up umbrella organisations to co-ordinate the allocation of supplementary assistance and give districts a coordinated voice through to central government in helping their citizens in need. At the time the WDWC was established in 1952 many people remained apprehensive of big brother government. Most welfare provision remained in the hands of local organisations and especially churches. Also there remained a genuine fear that central government may try to take over all welfare provision throughout the country. Such was some concern about the new WDWC that for many years the City Mission refused to become part of the organisation. According to Mr Lake's taped interview, the City Missioner in 1952 Mr Harry Squires' refusal to link up to the WDWC was based on his concern that the new body would effectively disrobe the noble figure of charity. Mr Lake said that Mr Squires was a law unto himself but did often have direct access to Prime Ministers of the day.

Mr Lake confirmed that by being part of the central government machine the WDWC itself too had access to key central government figures including the Ministers of Welfare, Health and Education. Mr Lake also recounted that by the time of the taped interview (1999) the Wellington District Welfare Council (by then Welcoss) was the only one still operating. He confirmed that the original WDWC came up with several ideas to pursue through combining the resources of the WDWC's member agencies. These projects included working to obtain and support initiatives to build quality and affordable housing for the district's elderly; develop and then manage an ongoing update of a directory of community welfare providers; and the provision of a Senior Citizen's Club. The latter was achieved after raising having to raise some 26,000 pounds (\$52,000) through the support of local Rotary clubs and several Trusts. Mr Lake said that as the old Social Security Department became less involved in WDWC activities its commitment to ongoing administration support such as providing secretarial services and some of the group's costs also waned. He said that after he surrendered the secretarial role quite a number of subsequent departmental appointed secretaries seemed happy to relinquish their role after relatively short times in it.

1986-87 heralded the activities of the Ministerial task Force into Social Welfare and Income Maintenance together with those of a Royal Commission on Social Policy. Both have been previously referenced in this account. The eventual shelving of its findings were a blow to the many seeking social justice. Especially given that the Commission was required to have regard to ensure the maintenance of a standard of living sufficient to ensure everybody could participate in and have a sense of belonging to the community; a fair distribution of wealth and resources of the nation including access of resources to contribute to social well being and dignity and self determination of individuals, families and communities; and genuine opportunity for all people of whatever age, race gender, social and economic position or abilities to develop their own potential.

When key messages can be sorted from the above bureaucratise there was some potential for real progress in supporting New Zealand's needy. Progress which joined the Commission's report on the shelf or in holding open doors on hot summer days. It is possible now to see the 2012-13 movement supporting a living wage rather than a minimum wage even then emerging and being implemented had the Commission's report landed on more fertile ground. The battle for a living wage is still being fought some 25 years later.

Two major successes proved to be a combined office complex for voluntary organisations to work from and an inner city creche. Both initiatives were realised by the end of 1986 after close involvement with and the support of the Wellington City Council. The City Planner had been an enthusiastic supporter of the former from its inception. Early the following year, Mayor Jim Belich had gone even further suggesting the possibility of a purpose built facility to house the city's voluntary welfare agencies under one roof. Over 1986, work continued to find a more permanent home for Wellington's voluntary welfare agencies. It was a concept that the Wellington City Council continued to support.

Yet another triumph was the first new New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS) conference in December 1987. The new body was progressed to fill a gap when the Government abandoned both the former National (or NZ) Social Services Council and its replacement, the Welfare Advisory Committee.

The first meeting of the proposed new national body was a formative one. It took the place of the former annual meetings of district councils of social services in order to gain support for a formal acceptance and launch of the concept. With initial Labour Government financial support for national conferences the new national body became a reality. A key early proponent, David Robinson, was its first head. But he stood down after one year to undertake a part time salaried research role with the new entity.

Walking to and from work through the city in the 1980s often meant skirting round construction sites as the city's landscape continued to change and evolve. New high rises and the demolition of long established icons and the loss of much of the city's former environment together with locations previously inhabited by numbers of voluntary welfare agencies was of sufficient concern to be reported in the 1987 annual Chairman's report. However, most attention at the meeting was focused on the address of Social Welfare Minister, Dr Cullen.

The Minister outlined a number of developments he was instigating which would influence the relationships between his department and voluntary organisations. The Government's approach was based on de-institutionalisation and decentralisation of funds and services. Government initiatives were to include the search for placements into community rather than institutionalised care for departmental clients. This would see the closure of many of its current residential children's homes. In Wellington this meant a regional alternative management plan to develop a network of integrated services and programmes including incorporating voluntary sector services. New District Executive Committees would also oversee his department's administration across the country. In respect of community care for mental patients released into the community Dr Cullen explained that he was concerned at the lack of support in Wellington for these. He believed that the Wellington Hospital Board had not released adequate funds from their budgets to provide for the satisfactory level of accommodation, care, and supervision of this group within the community. It was a matter he saw as needing to be addressed. Dr Cullen also referred to the report of the Ministerial Task Force on Social Welfare and Income Maintenance. The report titled, "The Way Ahead" had come out in September and had over 50 recommendations. Some had already been implemented by the time of Dr Cullen's speech. The meeting waited in eager anticipation for Dr Cullen's comments on another recommendation to establish a National Resource Centre for Voluntary Agencies. Dr Cullen confirmed a one off grant of \$100,000 to assist the setting up such a body. But he cautioned he was expecting greater efforts to monitor service delivery and the value of services themselves than in the past. Dr Cullen also said future funding of voluntary agencies by his department would come with strings attached. Such strings would include agencies having to provide exactly what the Social Welfare Department deemed as being required with the funds provided. In other words voluntary service agencies would contract with the Department to deliver specific services. Another possibility being considered was a tendering process for service funding or alternatively a fee for service.

In October 1989 the Government announced a contracting system for existing funding of community voluntary welfare services from the annual social welfare vote. Accountability was to underpin future central government funding for voluntary sector activity. The Government believed money had, in the past, been just handed over without expressed agreement on its use by either party. WSSC members were alarmed that the new funding approach would force individual applicants to compete against each other for allocations.

61.

Over the 1980s outside presentations of interest to WSSC meetings included topics ranging from child protection by members of Wellington's newly formed Child Protect Team; new area health board concepts; social welfare infrastructure and funding changes (including a 1987 speech to Welcoss members by the Minister of Social Welfare, Dr Michael Cullen); community work training; new planned motorway extension plans from Mike Edwards of Works Consultancy; new Lotto grant systems; the Community Organisation Grants Scheme; and making funding applications through the Sutherland Self Help Trust.

With the Fourth Labour Government's welfare and health reform programme of significant interest and note representatives of the Wellington Hospital Board, and Department of Social Welfare officials were regular attenders of monthly full WSSC Council meetings. So too were Community Service Divisional representatives from both the Wellington City and Regional Councils.

New organisational faces appearing over the decade on the Welcoss Executive through general membership or their participation in Welcoss activities and forums included: the Pacific Islands Resource Centre; the Office of Miramar MP, Peter Neilson; Peri Natal Data System; the National Multiple Sclerosis Society; St Joseph's Relief Centre; the Mental Health Services Group; Attendant Care; Newlands Community House; National Council of Women; the Wellington Community Child Care Association; Morehu Social Services; Age Concern; the Schizophrenic Fellowship; the Girls Friendly Society; the Cancer Society; the Family Planning Association; the YWCA, the Marsden Club (Alzheimers' Day Care); the Youth Development Centre; the Wellington Central Baptist Church; and the Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations.

Of considerable interest was the recording of the attendance at one Executive meeting of a representative of the Kilbirnie Tennis Club. Why, or how, that formal membership of the WSSC came about was not traceable in the records of the time.

Towards the closing years of the decade the WSSC addressed the need to ensure it met its Treaty of Waitangi obligations and increase its contact with, and uptake of, local Maori Iwi and an increasing number of new Maori community groups. The Executive held discussions with local Iwi representatives on how best to achieve its obligations. The outcome was a vision to guide future relationships with, and support for, Wellington Maori on welfare needs.

Between 1981-90 the WSSC was served by some 13 Chair persons. A number served jointly at varying times. Father Brian Sherry provided continuity of leadership between the previous and current decade until the 1982 AGM. Then WSSC's mantle of stewardship fell to Ann Shaw of the Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (1982), Sue Driver from the Wellington City Council (1983), Selwyn Boorman from the NZ Prisoners Aid & Rehabilitation Service (1984), David Robinson of the Wellington Community Child Care Association (1985), Viv Hamilton of the Community Work Training Project, and Graham Wilson of the Wellington City Council (1986), Sue Driver again with Karen Ward from Presbyterian Social Services (1987), Lois Duurloo of Barnados and Mark Pierson from the Friendship Centre of the Baptist Church (1988), Aileen Buchanan of the Girls Friendly Society (1989) and Brian Chisholm of PARS (1990).

1981-90: The Decade in Detail

WSSC Chairperson, Mrs Ann Shaw, began 1981 on an optimistic note. But she also cautioned members that the year would be a busy one. In her February Chairperson's newsletter for the year she explained that one reason for what was likely to be a demanding year was that it had been designated the International Year for Disabled Persons (IYDP) meaning considerable WSSC involvement. It would include liaising with groups the Council had not had a lot of dealings with in the past. With the area's unemployment rate rising by 100% the newsletter promulgated a new job creation scheme to member agencies and other groups whose activities may be being stifled through a lack of personnel. The scheme provided placements for up to 12 months. The scheme would also reimburse agencies for the amount of wages provided each placement.

One outcome was a possible project to set up a Clerical/Secretarial Resource Centre staffed by scheme placements. The centre would provide secretarial and clerical support services to smaller voluntary agencies and groups who may be struggling to cope with their administrative requirements. Potential user groups were asked if they could provide equipment for the centre. The WSSC also agreed to seek funding to support the appointment of a supervisor to oversee the service. In her final comment Mrs Shaw urged that only as a united Council could WSSC succeed in working for the good of the community. She hoped social welfare provider groups in the city which were not yet members would sign up. To existing members she urged greater attendance and participation in Executive and Council meetings ahead.

Twenty-four members attended the first full Council meeting for the year. There they heard that a previously proposed Law Centre for the city was now a "goer" with the City Council close to confirming premises in Aro Street for the new service. A stay of launch date was later forced on the Law Centre when the group found that the building designated for their use was under a demolition order. By May, however, the new service was near to launch from premises in upper Willis Street. The new concept would involve up to 100 law students providing a rostered free legal advisory service 4-5 nights a week provided under the supervision of a qualified solicitor. To date some 50 solicitors had enlisted to provide this role. Organisers were also considering applying for WSSC membership once Law Society approval for the concept was given and the service was fully operational.

In February, the Social Planning Sub-Committee confirmed that it had prepared proposals for two of the still developing areas in Wellington, Newlands and Miramar. However, the sub-committee required additional input from the two areas' respective local voluntary agencies before tabling their findings. Sub-committee members did indicate issues around health services, public transport, impact of industrial zones, and pensioner needs in each of the two areas surveyed.

Later in May the Home Help Sub-Committee expressed ongoing frustration with Social Welfare Department officials at their laxity in confirming, or otherwise, the availability of subsidies for home helpers. Also confusing was where boundaries existed between Hospital Board and SWD responsibilities in regard to home help support.

63.

A proposed Clerical/ Secretarial Resource Centre remained only a concept by May. But by September likely premises and volunteers had been found and its realisation was on track. The service would use volunteers or a combination of paid workers and volunteers. Users would pay a small annual fee to help defray costs. They would also provide materials and equipment.

By the middle of the year growing interest in employing disabled persons saw the WSSC receiving a number of offers from local companies and government departments to employ and train disabled people. These were passed on to those voluntary agencies which focused specifically in the needs of disabled people.

Regional meetings of District Social Services Councils and/or related umbrella groups and local authority representatives continued throughout the decade. The first of these was in June 1981. This first meeting included five representatives from the Wellington Regional Council including its Chairman and two from the Council's Planning Department; six elected councillors from one or other of the Wellington, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt City Councils and Tawa Borough. The National Council of Women and even the Arts Council were also represented among the 34 attendees. Unemployment; accessibility of health services including the need for a Pacific Island interpreter service; employment opportunities for disabled persons; growth in violent crime; the nature of regional government including the need for two way communication between the regional authority and various local councils and social service providers; and obtaining ongoing rather than one off funding all featured in the various presentations.

Attendance by one or two elected Wellington City Councillors were common at many WSSC Executive and full Council meetings in this period of the Council's history. Councillors Mr Les Paske and Mrs B. (Betty) J. Campbell were two whose names were regularly featured on the attendance sheets. June also saw the Friendship Centre formally admitted to the WSSC thus joining the Richmond Fellowship as new members.

Mrs Shaw's annual report presented at the end of the year in November 1981 reminded those present that the Council's aims were to: assist central government and local bodies in the improvement of social services for Wellington City; facilitate coordination between social welfare agencies and relevant local authorities and the Government; and enable voluntary agencies and the community's voice to be heard in the formation of social policy.

Mrs Shaw reported on the work of the Home Help and Social Planning Sub-Committees over the year. The former was now supporting the work of an appointed researcher while future effort by the latter would likely focus on rehabilitation for the disabled and eliminating factors in suburban areas which might lead to domestic violence and even suicide.

A suggested WSSC programme for 1982 was released following the 1981 AGM.

Suggestions to focus the attention of Council members were: actively supporting the principles for the recently released Early Childhood report and continuing education programmes; monitoring legislation for any discriminatory content; promoting appropriate use of leisure time and leisure education; and supporting not only traditional but also the more diverse types of family structures which were now evolving. An example was monitoring new legislation which may impact on family life. Indeed Mrs Shaw was of the opinion that this area might well be the major focus over the following 12 months. As such, she placed the item at the head of the agenda for the first WSSC meeting in 1982.

Other potential activities for 1982 highlighted were to: find and promoting ways to support parents wishing to remain at home rather than feel forced to seek jobs; and survey the availability of family related support groups and identify gaps.

Mrs Shaw was also looking forward to additional sub-committees, or interest groups, being formed to deal with any specific areas of concern that might arise. Guidelines promulgated to the Executive for consideration for future directions involved: making Council activities more relevant to member needs and in particular, smaller agencies; being more active in advocacy in response to social issues of the day including making greater use of the media; continuing its current coordination and information dissemination role; and encouraging a broader membership. Employing a support worker was also suggested as was a call for perhaps more informal meetings.

By 1982 the WSSC was regularly participating in meetings of the National Committee on Home Help and had committed through its representative to the Committee, Julie Tait, on the part undertaken by various Wellington agencies in providing home help related services. The WSSC was also involved in undertaking research into home help needs and service delivery around the region. This was being done with the help of a university student over the university vacation period. It was hoped that a subsequent action plan would lead to the appointment of a home help coordinator for Wellington. By the start of 1983 efforts to get a coordinator appointed had fizzled out. Largely as the Labour Department had not come to the party through one of its job creation schemes. Sub-committee activities also slowed while there were few replies from agencies being surveyed on their own home help provision. The Wellington Regional Council was then approached for sources of funds to hire a home help coordinator. However, by June it was obvious that WSSC was perhaps pushing a barrow up a steep hill and decided to wind down the sub-committee's activities.

In the words of Mrs Shaw later in the year 1982 had begun well but that support for Council activities waned as the year progressed. This was despite a varied programme being organised. The lack of support was reflected in mid year concerns that the the Volunteer Bureau may have to close. Given the considerable efforts and workload of the current Volunteer Wellington organisation (as at mid 2013) in sourcing and training a volunteer pool to service a heavy demand for volunteers to various agencies in and around Wellington, the demise of the 1982 version is hard to fathom. Especially so with many organisations at the time reporting difficulties in recruiting volunteers. Mrs Shaw urged the need for potential volunteers to be assured of being provided with good support in their roles.

65.

She asked user agencies to ensure they had sufficient skills in personnel management, providing adequate job satisfaction, recognition and rewards and effective selection methods to ensure appropriate fits between volunteer work roles and the volunteers themselves. By early 1983 both the Volunteer and Secretarial Bureau services were stuttering. Unused equipment, empty offices, no workers, and no coordinators marked the position at that time.

In November 1983 the Council finally agreed that the Volunteer Bureau be wound up and its assets taken over by WSSC. These included typewriters and a gestetner copier to be distributed to member agencies. It was also in mid-year that the WSSC considered setting up a Funding Sub-Committee to advise and guide agencies wishing to apply to a range of sources (government, local authority, trusts and private) for funding.

The need even then for robust business cases was seen as a key in persuading funders to support local agencies.

But with falling interest it was reported to the first meeting of the Executive the following year that little progress had been realised in respect to dealing adequately with funding shortages. As funding remained an issue, however, a practical one off seminar was thought to be one way to generate some assistance to smaller agencies with their funding efforts. There was agreement to proceed with this.

At this point it should be noted that there appeared to be little other documentation for that particular year held in Welcoss records. At some point over the year the use of the Wellington Council of Social Services (or Welcoss) was recorded in the minutes. The Council remains operating under this title today (2013). But most minutes through the period continued to be recorded under the WSSC banner. The revised constitution at the end of the 1980s too retained the WSSC title.

With support again having fallen for WSSC 1982 began with yet another review of the Council's structure. Executive Council member, Ms Sue Driver, suggested seeking advice from members and other various voluntary social welfare agencies as to what they needed from an umbrella group and what forms of coordination they would accept. By 2013 formal surveys of members were an already a regular exercise undertaken by Welcoss. In 1982 the lack of follow up by the Executive on reports provided by the various sub-committees and interest groups was also reported as an issue contributing to falling support. This even though there was a general consensus that social service councils remained a valuable coordinating avenue.

Another suggestion was that perhaps full meetings of the Council should be again quarterly with the gaps filled by newsletters to remain contact and disseminate information. Some progress in developing an effective newsletter had been made. To this end 1983 started with discussions over format, printing, and editorial and production oversight. The production oversight role eventually fell to WSSC Executive member, David Buller. By September 1983 a further canvassing of agencies as to their requirements from a social services council was put forward.

Yet another change suggested to maintain agencies' interest was that there be one monthly meeting of both the Executive and full Council. The early part of each meeting would have a business and administration orientation. Full council information sharing boosted by presentations on topics of mutual interest would follow. That approach was not too dissimilar to the format followed from 2001.

In 1983 the Executive was still grappling with the most appropriate and most effective operating structure for its activities. Operations of the Christchurch and Napier models had been looked at with the Christchurch approach using three to four full meetings a year with other work undertaken by a number of interest groups being the most favoured. Already several sub-committees or interest groups (Accommodation/Housing, Funding, Home Help and the Newsletter) were functioning. And it was believed these could be added to when any need arose. Whether or not the Home Help group would continue was a matter under review. It was eventually determined that the Home Help Group would continue to function as a coordinating group. But it was to be included separately on the Council's future mailing list.

For the remainder of the year the full Council continued to meet monthly.

Over 1983 the Accommodation/Housing group was looking more closely at identifying which organisations were providing housing (including the Wellington City Council) and how and just what were the needs of those seeking accommodation in the city. The Funding Group had at last got together a programme of seminars on the issue for local voluntary welfare agencies while a Work Schemes Group considered details of various available subsidised government work schemes and how they could benefit member agencies. At the time the level and impact of rising unemployment was stimulating considerable angst and discussion.

With an increasing work burden mounting for the Council's secretary the Executive agreed it was time to ensure a source of ongoing payment for the position. It was also agreed that payment would need to be based on a more robust job description than that currently in existence for a workload of around seven hours per week.

Towards the end of the year a trend was seeing less involvement in Council activities by statutory and some of the larger voluntary agencies. Yet participation by smaller organisations had increased. Again the format of meetings and surveys of agencies as to what they required from their umbrella organisation came out of the discussions on obtaining increased support and participation from member groups.

1984 did not open positively. By March there was no Chairperson or Secretary in office. And it was even suggested that the Council go into temporary recess. Despite various concerns over the last 30 years of its existence this was the closest that the WSSC/Welcoss had come to shutting up shop. The recess proposal was deferred to a special meeting. Only some five percent of the 200 organisations and individuals advised attended that occasion. While agreement was not unanimous continuance was voted for and the organisation lurched on. But at least it was still there to lurch.

At that meeting those present dictated what they saw as the positives from continued participation in the Council. While the continuance vote prevailed there was still the question of finding a Chairperson and a Secretary to fill the two vacant chairs. The special meeting also considered the value of obtaining ethnic related statistics as this was becoming a standard requirement for a lot of form filling. Pros and cons were vigorously debated. Defining the less privileged more precisely was put up against treating all New Zealanders equally and not by ethnicity.

By September 1984 there was a new government at the reins. Mrs Shaw reported considerable interest at the National Conference of District Social Service Councils in the comments of new Social Welfare Minister, the Hon Ann Hercus. Mrs Shaw advised the WSSC that the new Labour Government was setting up working parties to research social rehabilitation, social welfare service delivery, and children at risk. Mrs Shaw also said that the topic of most concern at the conference revolved around housing. As such the Council moved to place housing on the agenda for more detailed consideration at future meetings.

One such issue related to the position of single itinerant males and females. With fewer and fewer boarding establishments available, and at the time virtually no hostels, their plight was becoming acute. Housing needs of discharged psychiatric patients too remained an issue as it had over the last 30 years. The Council had identified some 50 persons currently needing supervised accommodation. The Richmond Fellowship had places available but only for those willing and able to rehabilitate. The Salvation Army's Bridge Programme was placing some itinerants in the former Police Barracks which it had recently purchased for this purpose. The WSSC agreed that the Government had to be made to realise that housing was becoming a huge social problem. It then opted to assume an advocacy role for the housing needy and assemble hard evidence to present to the country's politicians. A full day workshop or even a two day weekend seminar for relevant agencies, groups and individuals to formalise strategies and action plans on housing was vigorously promoted.

David Robinson had recently been appointed to a researcher position with the Funding Sub-Committee. By September he had 30 of some 100 questionnaires which had been sent to agencies to obtain details about funding concerns returned. Some larger agencies were apparently concerned to safeguard their own sources of funding and were unwilling, therefore, to provide much, if any, information. They were worried smaller agencies may later compete against them for these. The year ended with an amendment to the constitution proposed allowing for individual as well as agency membership of WSSC. A fee of \$3 was agreed for individual membership.

1985 began with the Executive looking for a part time worker to work on the newsletter, link with various suburban member groups and serve the Executive and other meetings. An advertisement for the position went into the Evening Post on 20 April. An appointment of Ms Barbara Turner followed in May. The WSSC's work on funding had taken the eye of the NZ Planning Council and both David Robinson and Sue Driver were then employed by the NZPC to work on a national evaluation of funding of community services. The idea of business meetings rather than Executive meetings found final favour. These meetings were to be open to any Council member to attend. It was also agreed to revise WSSC aims and objectives over the year. By mid year Executive (business) and full Council meetings remained in vogue.

In June, Wellington Hospital Board plans for changes of core health delivery in the region though the new Area health Board concept came under fire from some agencies. These reported their concerns to the WSSC regarding a lack of public consultation on the proposals while there were complaints that too few copies of the Board's report were available. The WSSC followed up these concerns with an invitation to a Hospital Board representative to attend the July WSSC meeting in order to better get a handle on exactly what was proposed and how these would impact on the Wellington community. The Board's representative, Mrs Marion Bruce, duly informed the WSSC that the Board's future priorities would focus on services that no-one else could provide. In other words it would be the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. That meant the Board's future focus would be towards the acutely and chronically ill. Mrs Bruce also referred to the boundary between health and housing needs. She said many in-patients would be able to be cared for within the community if adequate housing could be found. She explained that this group of people were an accommodation issue not a health issue. As such they were not really the responsibility of health services to provide for.

Early the next year the proposed separation between health and housing was causing great stress among many elderly. Those most impacted by the new policy were those on the margins. These also included people just out of hospital or prison; or from recent marital break ups. One outcome was a Wellington section of the New Zealand Housing Network with housing the city's elderly its top priority.

Changes which now saw most of Wellington's social work focused more than ever before on teenagers and abused children underpinned a social shift at a presentation to the Council's August meeting that year by Department of Social Welfare officials. More and more teenagers at that time were found to be needing help cope with social and cultural pressures of the day. Some de-centralisation of departmental social work activity was apparently in the pipeline in order to make more effective use of available resources in dealing with the above issues. A falling off of structures to assist New Zealand's elderly was also noted and remarked on. But no solutions were forthcoming at that point from departmental representatives present.

By September agreement had almost been finalised as to new letterhead using the initials of WSSC. As well, work over the year in support of an inner city creche was also coming to fruition. A working party (including Wellington City Council officers) had been established to launch the creche after several months of investigative effort by numerous groups. Attendees at the 1985 AGM were advised that the City Council had put the costs of its involvement in the project on its 1986-87 draft estimates.

A regional meeting of District Councils of Social Services and related groups reported that Levin had recently established a Social Services Council. As well, Kapiti and Upper Hutt Councils remained active but Lower Hutt and Porirua were still without umbrella structures. Shared office space for smaller voluntary agencies to operate from in Wellington City were also being sought over the year but by October there was still no light at the end of the tunnel on this matter. The light in yet another tunnel, in this case a source of Labour Department subsidies to support placements of workers in voluntary agencies, was also being turned off. Thus exacerbating already considerable pressures on the funding and staffing of these groups.

Till October 1985 the Labour Department had spent up to \$35 million a year in supporting voluntary agencies. The Department was emphasising that its role was funding permanent employment for those out of work not funding voluntary organisations through its job placement schemes.

The 1985 AGM was most significant for the sign off of founding member, Mr Wally Lake. He announced his retirement from WSSC to the meeting after some 33 years involvement. Much of it very active involvement. Drafts of a revised constitution were also distributed at the AGM for comment. It was explained that the new revised draft brought the constitution into line with the way that the Council was then functioning including the need to recognise individual membership.

By the start of 1986, and some 18 months after being elected, the reforming zeal of the Lange Labour Government showed no inclination it was slowing down. The Prime Minister's eventual call for a "sit down" and "a cup of tea" was still two years off. Early in 1986, one major tax change, the new goods and services tax (or GST) and its criteria for registering organisations was the theme of a special presentation at the WSSC meeting in March 1986. Members heard that registration was mandatory for organisations if sales or services totalled more than \$24,000 (including grants) per year. Another new government policy with a direct impact on the social service sector was the Community Organisation Grants scheme or COGs. This involved government grants and subsidies to community groups being determined and funded through regional COG appointed allocation committees. Early discussions hinged around whether or not the Wellington Region should submit a case for a COG allocation committee. Yet another early 1986 concern was how the revised lottery system (LOTTO) would operate. This was particularly so in respect to its impact on grants to community based social service groups.

A major review of social welfare services and income maintenance had already been launched under the auspices of a Ministerial Task Force. In turn its work was to feed into a Royal Commission on Social Policy which was to commence its own work early in 1987. WSSC undertook to research, run forums and then provide a realistic and practical report to the Task Force on aspects of income maintenance and social services. Consumers as well as individual agencies were involved and consulted as well as district social service councils and committees. The Task Force provided some assistance (up to \$3,000 per organisation for some 45 organisations through the Department of Social Welfare) to help in the preparation of submissions and to facilitate consultation. One keynote speaker on the subject to a WSSC meeting during the year was the Task Force's chief communications officer, Joanna Beresford. As well, the WSSC was on the Task Force's mailing list for its newsletters.

A new National (NZ) Council of Social Services was proposed at the regional meeting of District Councils of Social Services in May. The former NAT (NZ) COSS had been set up by the National Government with sector representation. Its role then was to advise the then Department of Social Welfare and Government on various social issues. In the 1980s the Council had been replaced by the Social Advisory Council. Again the new Council was a Government advisory body on social issues with direct links to the Government rather than representing the sector directly. One of its roles was to fund travel and accommodation for one representative from each district social services council to biennial national conferences.

It also drafted and organised the programme for these conferences. But this organisation too was designated to fall victim in January 1987 to the Labour Government's quango hunting axe. The announcement of the demise of the Social Advisory Council prompted WSSC Chairman, David Robinson to castigate the quango hunt in the Evening Post newspaper. He pointed out that the Advisory Council had worked closely with the various district councils around the country informing them of new policies and undertaking research on social concerns as well as funding biennial conferences.

In May 1986, and with no national social services body and the pending demise of the Social Advisory Council, the WSSC Chairman proposed a new National Council of Social Services to: provide unified views to the Government on specific social policy matters; represent small local groups and welfare agencies with no national body; provide a point of contact regarding central governing funding; and coordinate social research. The concept was floated at a Wellington regional meeting of district social service councils where it gained considerable support. Further endorsement was obtained at a national conference of social service organisations in August. A steering committee emerged from that meeting which got the ball rolling in November.

Other WSSC initiatives gaining substantial ground was an inner city creche and a complex to house Wellington's voluntary agencies under one roof. The WSSC had lobbied the Wellington City Council hard on both matters and worked closely with City Council officers to realise both goals. They were probably the WSSC's most outstanding successes of that year. By the end of 1986 the voluntary organisation complex had 18 tenants with a second office unit to open in the near future. The City Council assisted in negotiating leases and subsidising initial costs until user groups were self funding. Early in 1987, Mayor Jim Belich, told the WSSC he would not be averse to seeing a custom built complex being erected to provide subsidised space for voluntary groups to operate from. By the end of 1988 this was a reality with a purpose built complex on the upper level of the City Council's new Brittomart car park building. The complex was named after former City Councillor and avid WSSC supporter and activist, Betty Campbell. The timing was just right as the temporary premises in an older city building were described at the end of 1988 as at best, "grotty." Even then the move into the new facility was not without its problems. There was no refrigerator and meeting rooms were without chairs. Worse, the City Council declared it had no funds left to supply any shortfall.

The 1986 annual Chairman's report highlighted two issues of note for the following year. These being the need to foster working relationships with local Maori communities and the relationships between voluntary social service groups with the Government. Already funding concerns had been raised arising from the phasing out of the Voluntary Organisation Training Programme and its replacement with the Community Organisation Grants Scheme. The Chairman reported that the Government appeared to be attempting to use the voluntary sector to patch up the problems arising from its own new economic policies and doctrines. There also appeared to be little room for negotiation with the Government these days. This had been given weight in July 1986 by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Dr Peter Tapsell when he said that it was likely that the Government would oversee substantial cuts in social welfare provision. He confirmed fears that the new Lotto grants should not be used to fund long term social welfare. Rather they should be used to assist new and innovative community projects.

In April 1987, Royal Commission Commission on Social Policy Communications Officer, Joanna Beresford advised the WSSC of arrangements for submissions to the Commission and the Commission's timetable for its visits around the country. The Commission was scheduled to visit Wellington in June of that year. Funds would be forthcoming to assist groups with publicity, research, travel and attendance at hearings. Ms Beresford believed that the WSSC could play a pivotal role in coordinating various Wellington based organisations' input into the Commission's work. The WSSC Executive promptly applied for funding. However, the application was forwarded ahead of Commission appointments to various support roles and a wait ensued. By August when funding was still awaited Welcoss instead offered a series of combined workshops with its Lower Hutt sister organisation and trying to organise some district related research to feed into the Commission's work. Later that month, however, \$9,700 was received to support Welcoss' coordination of regional input.

Earlier in May, Ms Sue Driver, the Chairperson of the City Council's Social Services Committee updated the WSSC on the City Council's committee restructuring. This would see separate committees for social planning and public participation, housing, and social service support.

Further potential changes to social welfare provision were outlined by Social Welfare Under Secretary, Peter Neilson in July. He claimed that achievement levels of various welfare agencies was not all that high while the same agencies often competed for the same clients. He indicated that a more cost effective funding approach could see funds being targeted at individual consumer welfare needs. Mr Neilson believed such an approach would help make support agencies perform better than in the past and be more accountable.

Over the year the issue of voluntary workers' roles was considered. There appeared to be a wide range of responsibilities levied on volunteer shoulders. Some of the issues which emerged included: volunteers training newly appointed paid and salaried staff in their roles; expectations that volunteers fully assume the work of paid staff in their absence including call outs after hours; costs of travel for volunteers; lack of appropriate training for specific roles; differences of opinions between paid staff and volunteers as to the expected nature of volunteer work; a wide range of backgrounds and skills required for specific voluntary jobs; job creep involving volunteers in more hours than they signed on for; volunteers were sometimes seen by supervisors and bosses as being more effective with clients than paid staff thus causing some resentment; variations in the quality of support given by organisations for their volunteers; a lack of ongoing communication in regard to working conditions; and multiple numbers of paid staff directing volunteers causing some confusion;

Some possibility of a centralised training and support programme for volunteers was raised for further exploration. It was suggested that this could include training for agencies using volunteers and a mediation service for volunteers and paid staff.

WSSC representatives met regularly with the local Community Organisation Grants Scheme Committee and reported that by the end of August some 79 applications had been received for funding allocations. Cut off date was 31 December. At that stage it was not known if there was to be a further allocation round. Indeed in November Social Welfare Minister, Dr Michael Cullen signalled the end of the scheme within two to three years.

He intimated he would like to see more efficient ways of funding voluntary welfare groups. He saw the new District Welfare Committees set up to advise his department as a possibly more effective conduit to the distribution of funding to local voluntary agencies and groups.

The annual regional COSS conference at the end of October 1987 welcomed the continuation of Lower Hutt COSS which had been re-established only one year before together with efforts to re-establish the Wainuiomata and Upper Hutt groups. Relationships with each group's local authority were canvassed. In some cases (Upper Hutt and Kapiti) this was minimal. In others such as Napier and Levin the relationships were much stronger. Levin had a direct advisory role to the local council while in Napier the mayor, councillors and community workers were regular attenders at monthly meetings. Welcoss, in working with the Wellington City Council was keen to retain its watchdog role not tied directly to any one organisation.

The regional conference also saw a presentation provided on area health boards. The concept was launched in 1983 but by 1987 still had yet to be implemented nation wide. Finance Minister Roger Douglas and new Social welfare Minister Dr Michael Cullen told a national conference of hospital boards to take up the area health board mantle or else. Again the message was the New Zealand communities were being expected to take on greater responsibilities in providing health care.

David Robinson reported on progress towards a new New Zealand COSS with joint meetings of the NZCOSS Steering Committee with the Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations and the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services not yet agreeing on a unified approach. The matter was to be a key agenda item on the upcoming national conference of district social service councils in early December 1987.

The first meeting in 1988 saw the tabling of a Welcoss submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy. The formation of a Wellington Area Health Board was having a stormy path. WSSC representatives were closely involved with the existing Hospital Board and the Steering committee to progress an Area health Board for the region. Several issues had been identified foretelling of rough seas ahead. A consultative pamphlet was to be produced outlining the advantages in the area health board concept and distributed early in the year across the region. One issue of concern related to the funding of more services while the size of the purse would remain the same under the new concept. A conflict of people's expectations and the limited amount of funding available was seen as a major hurdle which could undermine the success of any new area health board.

In March the matter of establishing a women's night shelter was considered and further investigation agreed to. Contact was made with other cities which were running night shelters for women and meetings organised to determine how these were funded and run. By September WSSC was working with the Maori Women's Refuge group and had assisted in securing a \$14,000 towards their housing facility. By the end of the 1988 the Welcoss project team was also seeking funding for a stand alone womens' facility.

73.

The issue of improving mental health services looked to be also on sounder footing when Peter Sander of the Health Department told the May meeting of the full Council that millions of dollars would be available from the Minister of Health's reserve fund to assist in providing services for the mentally ill. Some \$32 million was available in the fund for the 1987-88 financial year.

With some 24 years now elapsed at the time this history was compiled, mental health needs remain among the more significant social issues within the greater Wellington region. The Minister's reserve fund was obviously insufficient to fasten down the lid on the issue. One initiative involving WSSC members was a scheme to use the vacant premises of St Helen's Hospital to house ex-psychiatric patients. Sixteen beds spread around three chalets and a 10 bed cottage was thought more than adequate to meet at least some housing needs for this group. A break through came in 1988 with a Housing Corporation grant of \$770,000 to the Wellington City Council for flats for ex-psychiatric patients.

As well, with the issue of Wellington's homeless currently (2012) sitting high on the region's agenda, it was interesting to note that in May 1989, the then Housing Corporation sought information from the city's community groups on the extent of the problem in Wellington. Then the Corporation offered the possibility of funding for experimental housing and injecting more flexibility within current housing policies to alleviate housing needs. The WSSC also agreed a project to look at the needs of, and the means to meet, housing needs of single people.

By the end of 2012 homelessness appeared to be the sole responsibility of the region's local authorities with minimum, if any, interest on the part of state organisations.

By year's end issues arose over the shift into and management of the new Betty Campbell complex. This had opened on 16 December, 1988. The WSSC had been excluded from any input into consideration of management options for the complex. The City Council had set rentals and support costs without consultation. Lack of funds to complete the complex's fit out have been already referred to while the early part of the following year saw additional work needed to sound proof meeting rooms against noise created by other tenant activities.

Over the previous two to three years the WSSC had benefited with regular press coverage in the two local newspapers, the Dominion and Evening Post. The latter in particular was regularly represented at WSSC monthly meetings.

1989 started off with WSSC business (Executive) and council meetings being held in the Betty Campbell Complex. An early plus was the Inland Revenue Department's according WSSC charity status for taxation purposes. WSSC also agreed to formally join the new national body (NZCOSS) at a fee of \$10. The impact of the planned State Highway 1 motorway extension around the Basin reserve and its impact on a number of community service groups housed in its way was the subject of the May meeting. However, by 1993 the project was effectively mothballed for another 15 years. At that time some re-alignment of streets was undertaken while in 2012-13 the major four laning around the Basin reserve and a fly-over in the vicinity once again became a major discussion point.

Some prevarication among City Councillors together with a divided community for and against were among the highlights (or low lights) in progressing the project. Less satisfactory were some 72 outstanding WSSC membership fees by mid 1989. This was counter-balanced by the growing number of positive responses to the WSSC newsletter which had gained increasing traction following its launch. The former Directory of Social Services was discontinued by the end of the decade. Instead, the WSSC opted to work with the City Council to provide input to its own directory.

Considerable work had been done over the latter part of the decade to bring the WSSC constitution into line with current needs. The group's title remained the Wellington Social Services Council (WSSC). Its aims and objectives were to: provide a forum for accredited members of social welfare and community organisations to meet and discuss relevant issues; seek the cooperation of member groups in coordinating responses to Wellington social welfare needs; identify and initiate new welfare programmes; help provide new welfare services including setting up steering committees to facilitate same; promote various sources of assistance available to community service organisation workers; ensure new services achieve the best use of community resources; and make representations to central and local government authorities and agencies.

Membership was defined as any social welfare and community service organisation and individuals accepted by the WSSC Executive.

1990 started positively with some 26 applications to the Executive Officer position with the WSSC. Of these, five were selected for interviewing. The WSSC also got behind an initiative to establish a Womens' Boarding House in the city with a management group to be formed on 8 February. Despite issues around location, ongoing funding, a heavier demand than the facility could cope with at times, and occasional availability of appropriate on sight management the concept flew and remained a "goer" through the following two decades.

February 1990 saw a request for the WSSC to provide a representative to a Wellington Office of the Department of Social Welfare's new Advisory Group to advise the Community Section of the office on local community voluntary group needs, funding, and priorities. Early support was also notified in support of the goals and objectives of the New Zealand Aids Foundation. In particular this related to protecting and promoting the continuing human rights of AIDS sufferers.

The Betty Campbell Complex was opened at the end of 1988 but was returning less positive outcomes than anticipated. Some voluntary groups had already vacated the premises. Yet others were proving reluctant to make their shift into the complex. To fill vacancies the City Council was contemplating expanding the tenancy entry criteria to sporting bodies and small businesses. Problem gambling and its affect on families was raising its somewhat ugly head by this time and a WSSC sub-committee of three was established to review what actions might need to be taken in addressing the matter. Maori political and cultural resurgence together with increasing numbers of Treaty of Waitangi obligations on the wider community by the end of the decade saw the WSSC acknowledge the need to establish contact partnerships with the growing number of new Maori community groups in and around the city.

75.

A facilitator was engaged to run a special WSSC meeting over a full day later in the year. This was to involve WSSC members looking at what the organisation stood for and its activities. From those discussions it was believed that just how the WSSC could meet Maori community needs could be developed. The possibility of co-opting local Iwi representatives onto the WSSC was also agreed. A subsequent vision for WSSC to honour its Treaty obligations included increased liaison with regional Iwi authorities; creating partnerships working towards greater understanding; looking at where WSSC services needed to change to facilitate same partnerships; recognising that processes required to meet Maori community needs may need to change; and being prepared to fully support any parallel Maori WSSC body if this was set up.

By mid year all written references in regard to the organisation were to use the term, Welcoss. From this point the use of the new title increased in use until it became the term generally used today to describe the organisation.

By September, the WSSC/Welcoss was able to report on a successful housing forum which it had organised on behalf of the Housing Corporation and the City Council's housing branch. Most central agencies and local authorities were represented at the forum. But disappointment was expressed at the lack of the new Area Health Board's participation. However, the WSSC/Welcoss committed itself to continue to work with the Housing Corporation and City Council on the outcomes of the forum and future ones. These were to be held each March and September.

Key personnel changes loomed for the new decade with the Chairman, Mr Brian Chisholm indicating a need to step down. As well, several of the current Executive also affirmed their inability to continue.

1991-2000

The Mother Of All Battles Verses The Mother Of All Budgets; MMP; New Zealand First, Apartheid and the Berlin Wall Fall

Background:

The 1990s in Wellington saw a continuation of large landscape changes. The construction of a new sports and event stadium on former Railway land near the port had been agreed, funded and commenced. By the end of the 1990s the new professional form of rugby was played in a new sporting venue in the capital. This was the Westpac Stadium or the “Cake Tin” as it came to be known. The new stadium became not only the home to Wellington and Hurricanes rugby. But it also hosted numerous concerts and extravaganzas as well as the Phoenix football side which plays in the Trans Tasman series. The new venue was also supposed to become the new home of international cricket in the capital. But, except for some shorter versions of the game, cricketers and cricket followers demanded the Basin Reserve remain the home of Wellington and test cricket.

The conversion of formerly hard to lease centrally located office buildings into apartments began and continued apace. The increasing volume of residents wishing to take up inner city living also forced the construction of new up market residential blocks and new housing complexes. Many of these, together with new suburban homes, were constructed under new building codes. Not far down the track there were to be unforeseen results which were to have significant financial impact for central government, the Wellington City Council, the building industry and affected residents alike. The move to increased inner city living certainly began to have a positive impact on the vibrancy of the city's central business district (CBD).

On the international scene the nation's attention was gripped at the start of the decade by a Sunni dominated Iraq Government's invasion of Kuwait and the world's response. Oil was king and nothing was going to be allowed to threaten western nations' supplies of the black gold. Iraq's leader, Sadaam Hussein, predicted the “mother of all battles” was looming against the rare western-arab military alliance. The battle when it commenced proved a bit of a damp squib. Big Iraqi numbers were no match against the latest in modern warfare technology. Iraqi forces were soon routed and an uneasy peace organised. Ruth Richardson's “mother of all budgets” was to prove another matter altogether for New Zealanders. The Labour Government of Mike Moore, still synonymous with “Rogernomics,” got a severe licking in the 1990 General Election. In came a National Government once more under the apparent pragmatic leadership of Jim Bolger. Pragmatism was far from the new Government's agenda, however. The new policies of Finance Minister, the Hon Ruth Richardson together with, her market forces comrade in Arms, the Hon Jenny Shipley (later Dame Jenny Shipley), caused the renaming of “Rogernomics” as “Ruthenasia.” Different names, same doctrine. Same old, same old. The “mother of all budgets” turned the country's labour laws and social welfare systems on their heads, shook them vigorously and then sent them reeling. Compulsory unionism went. It was replaced by new regulations, performance pay systems, individual work contracts and voluntary unionsim. Benefits were slashed; food queues accelerated in length; and by 1999 New Zealand's internationally unique and universal accident compensation regime (ACC) was being set up for sale.

The reaction was to see the Bolger Government turfed out of office at the end of the decade (1999). But before National's departure from power in 1999 the Government supported a leadership change in a Jenny Shipley led coup. This was when Prime Minister Bolger wanted his own version of a David Lange style "cup of tea" and had demoted his previous Finance and Social Welfare Ministers. The awkward relationship between National and its Treasury partner, New Zealand First, was also under stress. The result was a decline in favour at opinion polls. In this situation a change appeared much better than a rest.

The change also gave the country its first ever female Prime Minister.

The 1990s also saw the introduction of new electoral laws. This was the Mixed Member Proportion (MMP) system giving voters separate electorate MPs and party choices on their voting sheets. MPs from party lists soon joined their electorate brothers and sisters in Parliament. This outcome was the result of a referendum when a reluctant Jim Bolger had bitten his tongue and given the country a promise to determine whether or not they wanted a different way of electing their MPs in his 1990 election campaign. The new approach not only reduced his majority but brought in a raft of new New Zealand First and Alliance Party MPs. The first was under the baton of a former National Party member, Winston Peters. His party was promoted as New Zealand First which had appealed to both elderly and Maori voters. The Alliance was led by former Labour "wet" Jim Anderton with a number of diverse groups including a strong contingent of "Greens."

The NZ First group, with around a dozen MPs or so had to be incorporated in the Government in order for National to hold the Treasury benches. But when Jim Bolger was "rolled" by Jenny Shipley the Government's downhill slide continued. Messrs Bolger and Peters were "mates" and got on well at the personal level. Late night whiskeys in the Prime Minister's office kept their relationship a mellow one. Literally. But Mrs Shipley had little rapport with her Treasurer. The falling out, when it came, together with New Zealanders' distaste for Rogernomics in disguise, saw Labour back in charge after the 1999 election. This time under the leadership of the first elected female Prime Minister, the Hon Helen Clark.

A former political "dry" and Health Minister in the Lange Government Ms Clark was an astute politician. She proved very accessible (at least in her first two terms) and a genuine pragmatist. With Ms Clark's leadership skills backed by a pool of considerable talent, particularly in the form of its Finance Minister, the Hon Michael Cullen; Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon Phil Goff; and Health Minister, the Hon Annette King among others, Labour was to go on and win three terms on the Treasury benches.

Over the 10 years under review cell phones got smaller and smarter; computerisation of business and public service practice increased and became more complex; more contractors and consultants became involved in government business restructuring; Apartheid came to its end in South Africa; and the All Black rugby team failed to fire in three successive World Cup contests. Immediately after the 1995 rugby World Cup final the game went wholly professional. The professional version of the game evolved around five provincial based New Zealand franchises in annual competition with five Australian and four South African ones. As well, each national team from all three locked themselves into an annual tri series.

The end of South Africa's despised Apartheid regime was matched as the most significant event of the decade by the tumbling of both the Berlin Wall and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, The Ukraine, Belarus, Yugoslavia, Albania, East Germany and Hungary became independent nations once again. The new wave of nationalism in Europe fostered a Czechoslovakian split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. East Germany quickly returned to the pan German fold. The fall of the Iron Curtain launched a wave of nationalism enacted within Yugoslavia's old borders. But this time with far more violence involved. United Nations (UN) peace keepers and later the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces were to become involved in two vicious wars in the region.

In the first small numbers of UN troops were insufficient to stem the ethnic cleansings as Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Bosnian muslims and Monte Negrans set out to settle centuries old ethnic based grievances. The violence erupted when the Yugoslavian Federation became embroiled over which nation was to have parliamentary supremacy. Neighbours slaughtered neighbours and New Zealanders watched on their television screens from afar as the mass graves of butchered men, women and children were excavated and displayed for the world to see or read reports of senseless massacres after massacres of the innocent. The name of Sebrenica was to earn its place right up there with Auschwitz, Dachau, Belsen and Treblinka as venues of unbelievable mass atrocities and exterminations.

A later Serb invasion of Kosovo was halted relatively quickly by NATO forces. But only after further ethnic cleansings had signalled that Serbian capacity for revenge had not dissipated. The region remains a simmering nest of unbridled hatred still in 2013 as a UN protectorate. Some 20 years later Serbian and Croatian football teams had still not yet met on the field since the break up of Yugoslavia.

The disastrous USSR Russian invasion of Afghanistan at the end of the previous decade provoked both an international boycott of the 1990 Olympic Games and a huge distabilisation of that country. The impact of that invasion affected New Zealand still in 2013. The reduced Moscow Olympics was also the occasion of a state sponsored and drug induced East German swimming squad which swept all before it. The later exposure of what occurred began a world wide watch on drugs in sport. Its affect appears to be only stemming the tide somewhat, however, as technological advances still attract drug cheats in many sports encompassing cycling and even equestrian events.

Close to home Wellington began to earn its reputation as one of the better movie making locations in the world. Movie makers such as Jane Campion's and Peter Jackson's stature in the industry among others began to rise higher and higher. The era of cheap imported used Japanese motor vehicles reached its zenith. The phenomenon began in the 1980s. But by the end of the decade models were more becoming more reliable, less liable to rust, speedometers more accurate, and motor bodies more robust. The local new car assembly industry began to struggle a little as a result.

Of concern was the emergence and growing use of methamphetamine as the recreational drug of choice along with synthetic cannabis.

A lowering of the drinking age to 18 saw more inebriated Wellington youth on the streets late at night as Wellington became somewhat of a party town. Such was the growth of youth related issues in the city that in 1991 the Wellington City Council was pushed into developing its own specific youth policy.

The growth of party town status was aided in no small way by the success of the local movie making industry with films such as the Rings trilogy, King Kong and The Hobbit; the two yearly Arts and Fringe Festivals; a growing daytime coffee culture fostered to a degree by a trend to inner city apartment living; and international sports events such as the “rugby sevens” and big name concerts all at the new Westpac Stadium. These concerts included acts such as the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohn, and Elton John.

The march of technology grew apace. Personal pagers gave way to mobile phones, albeit somewhat bulky ones. These however decreased in size and function until by the end of the decade they could fit comfortably in a pocket, take photographs and shoot videos. After the millenium they were to increase their functionality and become smarter still. Until that is they finally became mini-computers. Laptop computers also became the rage and common over the 10 year period bounded by 1991 and 2000. On line communication became the norm through the decade. E-mail gradually took over as the prime conduit of both business and personal communication and saw an ongoing decline in traditional postage volumes. Even adjacent office staff took to e-mailing each other as the preferred choice of contact. By 2012 the impact of fewer volumes of letter mail saw reductions in New Zealand Post mail services and staff. The internet and its information and entertainment links such as YouTube also made encyclopedia sets redundant and enabled both local and international distance on-line shopping accessible and cheaper. Over this and the succeeding decade on-line innovations such as Face Book and Twitter revolutionised world wide social media.

1991-2000: Summary

It needs to be highlighted at the outset that records available for research on Welcoss activities for this particular decade were restricted to Executive Committee business meeting minutes and annual reports including Chairpersons' reports. No record of the monthly forums or correspondence were found.

The years 1991 to 2000 were not any less momentous for the Wellington Social Services Council, or Welcoss, than any that had gone previously. By the end of the decade the Welcoss label had well and truly stuck. Starting the decade as a written by-line only, the term Welcoss had gained general acceptance by the year 2000. During this period the organisation was led by five Chairpersons with Brian Chisholm continuing the role until 1991. Then Ann Town of the New Horizons Trust for Women took the Chair for the next four years. In 1996 Jenny Greenslade of the Epilepsy Association assumed command followed by John Consedine (Wellington Hospital) in 1998 and Kevin Hackwell of the Downtown Community Ministry in 1999.

Of note was the opening of the Betty Campbell Complex on level eight of the City Council's new Brittomart parking building. This had been in the making for some time as the envisaged collective home of Wellington's voluntary welfare agencies with shared support services. The complex was the result of years of effort on the part of Welcoss working with the City Council as more and more of the city's voluntary agencies found themselves without homes as large construction and renovation projects constantly changed the Wellington skyline.

The complex's title was a tribute to a former long serving city councillor and avid supporter of Welcoss, Mrs Betty Campbell. The complex was fitted out by the City Council and rents agreed with prospective tenants. These included the Welcoss Executive. As well, there were furnished offices and meeting rooms to be shared among tenants. By the end of the decade, however, the building was being sold. Even by then a number of the original tenants had already departed. Even on opening day some offices and meeting rooms lacked chairs and other furniture. Some of the pre-assumed support equipment and services were also lacking. This was largely due to the cost of the development being over budget. It was not the best of starts.

Later a rent hike had some complex tenants up in arms and proved an incentive for some to shift out. In 1998 with the building sold, the Wellington City Council had gone ahead and began developing the second floor of the Harbour Centre in Lambton Quay as the new Betty Campbell Complex. However, this had gone ahead without any consultation and a May 1998 shift was presented to prospective tenants and Welcoss as something of a fait accompli. Previous tenants were asked to declare their intent to occupy to the City Council in writing. However, a number of previous tenants had already been exploring other options. One was a venue at 75 Ghuznee Street and this loomed as a likely alternative for some groups at least. Welcoss was then invited to also consider being part of the breakaway tenant group.

Still rankling as a result of a lack of consultation over the Betty Campbell complex shift and possibly the size of the rent in the new venue, the Welcoss Executive determined on a new headquarters in Ghuznee Street. There it joined nine other voluntary agencies and has remained in residence to 2013.

Over the remaining years a good number of other voluntary organisations also found their headquarters in Community House in Willis Street and also Anvil House in Wakefield Street.

The format of Welcoss meetings through the 1990s remained largely the same as in the previous decade. The Executive met monthly with a business session while open forums were also held monthly on different days. These forums were publicly advertised involving expert presentations on topical issues. They were open to all and sundry including the press. On a couple of occasions the presenter was unaware of media attendance and could be somewhat put out by the resulting press coverage. On the whole the forums and workshops, when held, were well attended. One City Council initiative to get the community to look at what the city should look like in the future attracted some 125 participants. Eighty of these remained to participate in the workshops. Welcoss actively supported the forum including generating considerable interest among the voluntary welfare sector. Over the decade forum presenters included local MPs, an occasional Minister of the Crown and Wellington Mayors Fran Wilde and Mark Blumsky.

Forum topics included family violence, bi-culturalism, the International Year of the Family (IYF), mental health, funding, the impact of new government welfare targeting, crime, youth issues, occupational safety and health legislation, changes to central government welfare funding and delivery structures, refugee assistance and new privacy laws. Welcoss took a central role in organising a major IYF seminar attended by over a 100 when this event loomed on the annual calendar. Housing forums took the shape of a series over an extended period of time as the issues of housing for former mental patients, the elderly, and single itinerants became more acute. At this stage the then Housing Corporation was also active (or made so by Welcoss). One such project involved the Women's Boarding House with premises and a supervisor salary to find. Mental health issues remained significant in the capital for both the local authority and Welcoss to address over the period as did that old hardy, funding.

Of particular note during this period were the close working relationships that evolved with the Wellington City Council. The genre for Welcoss, the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC), was largely the brain child of the then Social Welfare Department. The Committee was used in a two way process. One was to establish a network of voluntary welfare agencies under the WDWC umbrella in order to alert central government through the Department of local welfare related issues. The other was to help realise government policy action in the region such as carrying out research on the viability of specific projects. Central government representation and input was significant. The Departments of Health, Maori Affairs and Education were yet other central agencies with representation and influence on the Committee. The Social Security Department also provided the WDWC with administrative support.

Over the intervening years, and with changes to the structure of various central government departments and agencies, central government representation and participation gradually eroded. Into their place, albeit gradually, stepped the Wellington City Council. By the end of the decade the City Council funded a good portion of Welcoss' costs including the salary of its Executive Officer and project seeding money. Both groups gave mutual support throughout the 1990s.

The advent of the Betty Campbell Centre to house Wellington's voluntary agencies under one roof at a reasonable rent was one gift from the City Council. Another was its support to the Women's Night Shelter without which the concept would not have been realised.

Wellington City Councillors were not seen at monthly Welcoss meetings as perhaps as much as they had been in the previous decade. Nevertheless, City Council officials were regularly involved while Welcoss met with each successive Mayor on a regular basis. These meetings became increasingly formal and worked to pre-set agendas. Welcoss for its part provided representation on City Council welfare project teams and committees while also advocating strongly with the Council on behalf of the needs of its members.

By the year 2000 computerisation had well and truly caught up with Welcoss as well. The Executive moved into the desktop environment with two computer purchases over the decade. This included a desktop publishing package to enable the formatting and publishing of a higher standard newsletter. The newsletter was proving a success as each year passed. By the mid 1990s there were some 300 organisations and individuals on the mailing list. To ease the increasing costs of production it was decided to impose a subscription.

Computerisation also facilitated the collation of Welcoss business and membership data; and member and client contact via e-mail.

Over the decade Welcoss former Chairman and Executive member, David Robinson's involvement gradually lessened. But only after some 20 years active association. Chairman in 1985-86 David's first contact with the then WSSC was through his newly established Wellington City Council role as Community Services Officer. As already recorded David's subsequent participation in the WSSC was through his association with an ad hoc mental health services group and the Wellington Community Child Care Association. During the 1990s he remained a member of the Executive through his research role with the second New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS). He and another Welcoss stalwart, Barbara Turner, were key protagonists of a revised nationwide body for Councils of Social Services. The first, a Government created entity had been disbanded some years earlier. David was the new NZCOSS' first Chairman. Barbara Turner served as the organisation's Executive Officer for a number of years. David's chairmanship of the new national body lasted only a year as he found a more productive and part time salaried role in undertaking low level research for the entity.

Already David's interests had taken him on secondment to the New Zealand Planning Council. And when that organisation fell victim to the Lange Government's "great quango hunt" from the mid 1980s he transitioned to working with the Institute of Policy Studies. These days (2013) he works within the umbrella of the Association of Non Government Organisations in Aotearoa (ANGOA). While still a Welcoss Executive member during much of the 1990s David's other interests saw him attend only on rare occasions. But while active with the WSSC and its later version, Welcoss, David had not only served as the group's Chairman he had also taken active participation in a number of sub-committee (or interest group) projects including taking on busy leadership roles. This work included working on the Funding, Social Planning, and Housing interest groups.

Often these sub-committees worked jointly with the participation of central government and Wewllington City Council officers such as the City Planner. One such example was in the area of social planning. This was a new approach being applied to new suburban development or extensions to ensure community social service needs were surveyed and planned for. David had also chaired quite a number of the region's district SSCs when these met.

Through the 10 year period organisations such as the Suzanne Aubert Compassion Centre, the Wellington Women's Boarding House, the Wellington Home Tutor Project, Wellink, the Downtown Community Ministry, the Wellington Housing Trust, Victim Support, the Women's Centre, the Eastern Suburbs Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Northland Community Centre, Mothers Alone, and Income Support Services provided new incoming representation on the Welcoss Executive.

By the end of the period it had been noted that average Network forum attendances had fallen to between 12-13 by the year 2000 from around 30 in the early to middle part of the decade. This led to consideration at the start of 2001 on the feasibility of holding forums at lunchtimes in order to attract higher attendance numbers. The years 1999 and 2000 had also seen a falling financial outcome with deficits recorded in both years and with extra funds hard to find.

On a brighter note Welcoss began working towards establishing a new accounting and auditing advisory service for community organisations. Initially an Adelaide model was looked at for application in Wellington. In the following decade the outcome was the Community Accounting Mentoring Service (CAMS). As at 2013 it was still going strong. The concept was almost unique to Wellington and has proved popular with community organisations of all types and colours. CAMS' reach spread to sports clubs and art groups as well as community and social service organisations.

At the end of the decade the Welcoss Executive Committee undertook some significant constitutional changes. Importantly these included formally confirming the organisation's title as the Wellington Council of Social Services (Welcoss). While Welcoss had been widely used over the present and much of the previous decade there had been some confusion with the organisation's existing name (the Wellington Social Services Council or WSSC). Other changes saw a shift in the Welcoss financial year to 1 July-30 June. The AGM was also moved to within three months of the end of the new financial year (30 June) while monthly financial reports were to be tabled at future Executive Committee meetings.

1991-2000: The Decade in Detail

While Welcoss had done remarkably well publicity wise over the previous 10 years the Executive Committee sought more planned promotion for the period ahead. Publicity started with the appointment of Baptist Church(Central) Pastor, Mark Pierson, as Welcoss Chairman for 19991 while Ms Helen Thompson of the City Centre for the Elderly was elected to the Deputy Chair position. At the time it was usual for Welcoss representation to attend various meetings of the city's voluntary social welfare and support groups. As an example over February and March 1991 there was Welcoss representation at meetings of the Wellington Volunteer Centre, the Poverty Action Group, the Wellington City Council's Maori Standing Committee, the Kilbirnie Community Centre, numbers of the Consumer Health Forum meetings, the Women's Boarding House, the Betty Campbell Tenants Association, a meeting with Labour MP, Ruth Dyson regarding the Volunteer Bureau, the Wellington City Council, and Rongotai College staff regarding the setting up of a module for transition to work schemes for sixth and seventh formers interested in assisting community groups.

March 1991 was marked by the bestowing of life membership to Mrs Norma Taylor to mark her 23 years involvement with first the WSSC and now Welcoss. Unlike the latter part of the 2001 to 2012 period the then Housing Corporation was continuing its active involvement in searching for local housing solutions with a series of housing forums. In these Welcoss members were very active. Of additional note in 1991 was an approach by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to have the department once again formally represented on Welcoss. There was some delight at this approach although DSW was informed that it was hoped that departmental representation would be at a relatively senior level.

Growing youth related issues including meeting demand for increased youth oriented services and recreational activities was to form the basis of the Wellington City Council's new youth policy. As such in April members of the Council's Community Development Youth Team were seeking Welcoss support to obtain input from various government and local voluntary agencies already working with the city's youth. Some 28 organisations were represented at a special follow up forum later in the month. The forum identified safety, health, employment, suicide and self harm, law enforcement attitudes, and cultural barriers among the key issues facing Wellington's youth. Council responsibilities considered essential to meet these included funding support groups, provision of adolescent crisis centres, targeted resources for youth, self esteem programmes, establishing a new city Youth Council, greater school liaison, funded and organised school holiday programmes youth matters having a higher profile on Council meeting agendas, and a systematic review and overhaul of all Council youth related services.

Thirty local agencies attended a special meeting in May that year to lay bare their issues relating to funding and client needs. By then agencies were increasingly needing more specialised help in dealing with a greater complexity of social problems while donations and other sources of funds decreased. Yet these same organisations still dealt with the increases in clients needing basic needs of life such as food, clothing and budgeting. As well many reported frustrating delays in getting responses from central government departments such as Health, Social Welfare and Inland Revenue. A lack of government direction left some groups in a planning limbo all leading to increased stress among agency staff and volunteers and their clients.

From the meeting a working party was set up to review in more detail events over the previous 10 years in respect to their impact on voluntary agency work in Wellington. Local back bench MPs were to be asked to attend future Welcoss meetings and forums while the Minister for Employment was to be contacted over concerns with the current make up of provisions of work schemes affecting voluntary agencies. A questionnaire was also agreed to for agencies to formally list their issues to be then taken up with the DSW. Some 25 agencies were then on hand the following month to quiz DSW attendees on their concerns arising from the earlier forum.

The march of technology also saw Welcoss looking to either purchase, or have donated, a computer for the use of the Executive Officer early in the year. By mid year the DSW sought Welcoss approval to be considered one of a number of city based consultative mechanisms on welfare. Issues continued with declining tenancy of the Betty Campbell Complex by voluntary community groups. With fewer tenants in residence electricity and other administration costs were having to be born by the remaining users. Even though rents had been lowered by some five percent, voluntary group tenants were having to carry an increasing cost load.

Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at Victoria University, Jonathon Boston's address on government targeting of health, education and welfare to the poor rather than social assistance for all drew fire from one attendee but who was not part of the Welcoss Network. At the time Welcoss meetings were public with each monthly meeting advertised in the local press. The names of special guest speakers and their topics formed part of the adverts. As well in the following year a Welcoss Lottery Grant of \$500 was put towards the cost of a new promotional brochure outlining Welcoss services.

The Hon Dr Michael Cullen was guest speaker at the Welcoss 1991 AGM. He had been asked to address long term consequences of current government policies together with future fate and/or role of welfare services. In April 1992 Department of Social Welfare and Inland Revenue officials were greeted by 34 concerned Welcoss members when they came to outline new departmental policies pertaining to changes to the community services card and ongoing family support. A subsequent Welcoss Housing Forum to consider 1991 budget provisions regarding state housing provision and policies around the accommodation supplement, planned benefit decreases, and rental increases drew an even greater attendance. There was also considerable ire at a late decision by Department of Social Development officials not to attend after earlier agreeing to do so. The meeting called for a moratorium against any further implementation of the policy with continuing pressure on politicians advocated to force changes. Or, if not, at least work to achieve a slow down in its implementation. Housing again came to the fore in May 1993 when Welcoss members along with a number of other agencies were invited into dialogue with the City Council over a possible sell off of the city's housing stock, an increase in rents and the Council's role as a provider of low cost housing. Following the dialogue Welcoss formed part of a working group to consider a housing options paper tabled by the Council. Other members of the group were the Community Law Centre, Salvation Army Community Services, Porirua Hospital, The Inner City Ministry, the Wellington Housing Trust, the Women's Boarding House and a private housing consultancy.

Later in 1992 Welcoss reported back on the proposed structural changes to the Department of Social Welfare and the roles and impacts of the new NZ Income Service, the NZ Children & Young Persons Service, and the NZ Community Funding Agency. The following year a Community Funding Agency official outlined how the agency would operate in the capital.

Proposals for a Wellington Volunteer Centre were still proceeding into 1992. At that time Welcoss was fielding increasing numbers of calls regarding voluntary work. To better manage the situation Welcoss began a register of agencies using volunteers and their training programmes.

Power politics at NZCOSS level raised its head in 1992. Then the Auckland region of NZCOSS sought recognition and membership of NZCOSS in its own right with the Auckland Regional Council of NZCOSS choosing its own representative for the national Executive Committee. The Welcoss view was not in favour of what appeared to be the insertion of an additional management tier in the national structure. It was felt that that it was better for NZCOSS to have the fairest possible representation of all areas rather than support a concept which would only increase the bureaucracy at national level.

Good news followed in March when the Housing Corporation of New Zealand agreed to refurbish the Women's Boarding House premises after some initial prevarication on its part. It was reported that the premises should be ready to receive tenants from 1 July.

Over the current and previous year Welcoss had been a facilitator of various forums. Indeed these had tended towards being held each month under the Welcoss banner. Some forums had been ongoing such as a series of housing and health forums which involved relevant central government agencies and the City and Regional Councils. By mid 1991 some nine member organisations had put in additional requests for Welcoss forums on a range of topics. First up was a forum on crime in the city. Dealing with the media, income support, youth issues, family violence, Treaty of Waitangi obligations, the new Privacy Act, refugee integration, employment, newsletters, mental health, new occupational safety and health regime, and funding were yet other examples over the following years. By 1992 some monthly forum topics were being considered to run as two day workshops at least where more in depth consideration by participants might be deemed appropriate. One topic put forward in this category was assisting organisations to better account for GST. One group member, Morehu Social Services, had seen its Board dissolve itself mainly due to a large unpaid GST bill. Other topics suggested included new privacy obligations, erosion of welfare services, the International Year of the Family, Wellington City Council housing and the closure of DSW's Sexual Abuse Centre.

For some time the monthly open forums proved a resounding success with up to 55 groups and more often represented. However, in 1995 Father Des Britten of the Wellington City Mission indicated his unwillingness to speak to one proposed forum on the City Mission's role and future direction. The November 1991 meeting announced that Mrs Ann Town would accept the Chair for the following year. But she asked that her role be restricted to chairing only meetings of the Executive Committee. Welcoss Executive members were to be rostered to chair the monthly public forums.

1993 started with the need to set up a meeting with the new Mayor, Fran Wilde. The agenda for this was to ascertain Welcoss' role in the years ahead including its continuing role in the Capital Forums, a low cost housing project on Lambton Harbour, and a perceived impression of large amounts of money being spent on inner city projects at the expense of some city suburbs. Welcoss had been a vigorous advocate for the City Council to remain a provider of low cost housing and there had been some concern that this might not continue to be the case down the track. Computer training for the Executive Officer was on an early 1993 agenda to enable Welcoss to set up a computerised operational and member data base; and to facilitate future newsletter writing and production. Family violence was the subject of the full Welcoss meeting in May. This involved the participation of the Family Violence Network made up of Rape Crisis, Men for Non-Violence, Women's Refuge, Victim Support, Sau Inc, and a number of Maori and Pacific Island groups. From mid year tea and coffee were also served from a trolley by the door into the meeting room at monthly forums. Approval was also sought and approved to employ a data entry operator for four to six hours to computerise the mailing list.

A \$500 Lottery grant was received to go toward the development and publication of a promotional pamphlet outlining Welcoss services. Content and printing approval was given before the end of the year (1993).

A big turnout of Welcoss members attended a funding forum in August 1993 where Roy McKenzie Foundation member, Funding Information Service and NZ Association of Philanthropic Trusts representative, Jenny Gill, brought the bad news of a lack of growth in NZ of grant making trusts. Applicants for trust funds now included schools, hospitals, sports clubs, polytechnics and even some state agencies such as the NZ Customs Service. Members were advised not to take trust money allocations for granted. They were also advised that more information was being sought by many trusts and other funders which needed to be complied with within stipulated time frames. It was a clear pointer to the following decade with application criteria becoming even tighter and subject to even more information including evidence of organisations running to sound business practice models.

October 1994 saw Wellington's International Year of the Family (IYF) seminar in which Welcoss had a leading organisational role. Workshops at the seminar were undertaken by the Community Law Centre, Banardos, Presbyterian Support, Parentline, Birthright, Multiple Births Association and Age Concern. Over 100 attended. By 1995 there were some downstream concerns at a lack of progress on the Wellington region's recommendations. Welcoss considered that with the spending of over \$2 million on IYF activities its outcomes deserved a more positive response from central government.

Looking towards the rest of 1995 Welcoss again sought DSW ex-officio representation from its Children and Young Person's Division (Wellington Branch) to Executive Welcoss meetings. Especially so given the Department's early history with the organisation. CYPS Manager for the Wellington District, Mr Bryan Hay, then joined Welcoss shortly after. In January 1995 Welcoss was asked to nominate a member to serve on a Wellington City Council steering committee to consider whether or not to set up a Safe Community Council in Wellington. Charmaine Ross from the Community Law Centre agreed to take on the role.

Despite some wavering of enthusiasm at senior levels of the City Council the Steering Committee met several times and progress made. A memorandum of agreement was signed, advertising went ahead for a full time coordinator, and a public meeting called to seek input.

By the end of 1995 the Welcoss budget was some \$900 over spent with expenses of \$23,000 largely resulting from additional International Year of the Family seminar costs. Welcoss was also made aware that the \$14,000 salary grant from the Wellington City Council would, in future, be contestable. As such its receipt should not be considered a foregone conclusion. However, on the positive side was the news that the Executive Officer's new hourly rate was to go to \$15 an hour. A new computer with more advanced desktop publishing software was also agreed at a cost of \$2,000. The purchase was in order to enhance the format of the newsletter thus maintaining Welcoss' professionalism and credibility. The newsletter was already proving to be a valued information organ within the city's voluntary welfare sector. By 1998 some 300 recipients were on the newsletter mailing list. The Executive was assured that the financial position of the organisation was sound going forward into the next financial year at least.

New Mayor elect, Mark Blumsky, addressed the 1995 AGM. He brought forward the concept of Welcoss meeting with him more regularly than was the case at present. Changes to the Executive in 1996 saw Mrs Ann Town stepping down as Chairperson but remaining on the Executive. For the previous several years Executive Committee meeting attendance ran at around six to 10 on average after apologies. Retiring Chairperson, Mrs Town, suggested that the numbers on the Executive were too small and should be raised to ensure a better workload spread.

1996 started off with applications being considered for an upcoming Executive Officer vacancy. The 11 strong Executive itself comprised John Consedine (Catholic Social Services), Marie Cheetham (Adult Reading & Learning Assistance), Anne Frood (GFS House), Chairperson, Jenny Greenslade (Epilepsy Association), Sister Annette Green (Suzanne Aubert Compassion Centre), Franyja Johnson (Safer Community Council & Women's Boarding House), Therese O'Connell (Wellington Home Tutor Language Project), Norma Taylor (Deaf Welfare Services), Anne Town (Community Health, Wellink), Dawn Tuckwood (Downtown Community Ministry), and Lorraine Ward (Presbyterian Social Services). Ex-Officio members were Helen Dawick (Wellington City Council), Bryan Hay (CYPS), CFA Wellington Office, Nigel Bickle (NZISS, Wellington City Office), David Robinson (NZCOSS), and Barbara Turner (NZCOSS Executive Officer). Later John Wilson of Income Support Services was also added as an ex-officio member. The list recognised some major shifts of representation on the Welcoss Executive in recent years. Particularly in regard to newer organisations active in the sector.

By 1996 the Shelter for Women was on the cusp of reality. Funding for a salary had been assured and applications lodged to the Wellington City Council for premises and incorporated society status and funding. By mid year the position of the Wellington Women's Boarding House was less clear. Opened in 1992 its continuing viability was under threat from a demand for market rental for the premises (\$42,640 a year), and a lack of commitment by government officials to meet rental increases as indicated by the Government itself.

Follow up lobbying resulted in the rental reverting to its previous rate pending legislation clarifying future rental arrangements of community groups with the Crown.

Welcoss Executive Officer of six years, Janet Weir, spoke to a February 1996 Welcoss forum on her thoughts of working with Welcoss over that time. Her most lasting impression was the spirit of the people who worked in the social service sector. She cautioned that regardless of what successes achieved in the past and in the future it would be naïve to ever think there would be never any social problems to do battle with; or that working in the social services sector would ever be an easy ride. She also noted that some pupils at her children's school were missing out on breakfast and lunch. This was an interesting observation given the size of that same problem by 2013.

Welcoss nominee to the Wellington City Council's Steering Group for the "Our City-Our Future Project", Karen Smyth, reported that meetings were chaired by the Mayor. The project listed some eight themes to pursue. These being the development of a caring community, employment, education, information and technology, transport, recreation and leisure, the natural environment, the built environment, and culture. The themes were the basis of a community forum (attended by 150 people with 80 participating in the workshops) and provided the framework for specialist working groups. The City Council had provided for \$100,000 in its 1996-97 annual plan to fund the project's activities. Ms Smyth urged Welcoss members to participate in future workshops and particularly with the Caring Community Working Group.

Existing issues for voluntary welfare organisations were identified in a March 1996 forum organised by Work & Age Trust head, Roger Tweedy (later to go on to being a valued and long serving Welcoss Executive member). Attendees also considered what might be different five years further on. Present issues identified included: retaining paid staff and volunteers; shifts in central government policies; duplication or over lapping of services; funding; communication; complexity of issues; lack of adequate time and people resources; outdated management procedures being applied by some agencies. Looking ahead, forum participants believed successful organisations would be those that: shifted to modern business models of operating; achieve a higher degree of input into central government decision making; able to address more both bi-cultural and multi-cultural issues; valued different skill sets; dealt with a decreasing volunteer pool with alternate means of meeting personnel needs; developed stronger public profiles; and had improved their research capabilities. It was also believed that successful voluntary agencies would be those that became adept at getting publicity, working the system, and accessing resources.

October was the month set aside for a meeting with the Mayor at which the following topics featured: the sale of Betty Campbell House; Womens Boarding House funding; the emergency shelter for women; City Council rental housing; housing for people with special needs; and community consultation.

The sale of the Betty Campbell Centre was of immediate concern with the City Council having agreed to sell the complex subject to a two year lease back clause. The Council had also agreed to find alternative accommodation for the tenants.

An August report back by a working group of Welcoss members who had been involved with the Regional Health Authority over a year on the need for a refugee trauma centre indicated support for the concept. It was acknowledged that immediate refugee needs focused on the physical such as housing, finding work, and locating children into schools. However, it had been noted that some trauma issues among refugee families did arise between 12 months and five years after re-settlement. As such it was recognised that a trauma centre operating under Mental Health Foundation auspices would provide refugees with required trauma related support. The centre was envisaged as being regionally focused encompassing Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa and Wanganui. Referrals to the centre would be from appropriate agencies and general practitioners (GPs). Advisory group members were deservedly praised for their efforts by Welcoss Chair, Jenny Greenslade. It was also reported that “one stop shop” premises for a number of refugee and immigrant support agencies would be realised by the end of the year.

The upcoming AGM for the year was to be Welcoss' 21st (although it would be the 44th if the years of operating under the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC) banner were also taken into account). The occasion was celebrated with a cake specially baked for the event. Twenty-two members were eventually on hand to receive a slice. The end of the year also saw an address to Welcoss given by the regional manager for the Wellington Volunteer Centre. This was to be a forerunner to Volunteer Wellington. The audience of only nine was disappointing given many of the city's voluntary agencies relied on volunteer workers. Those present heard that some 500 local organisations had either registered available positions or in some way used the centre since its opening. Over half the number of registered volunteers were under 20 years of age with some 80% in total not in any form of paid work. Most were students, were unemployed, or were solo parents. Surveys of volunteer workers had revealed that for them needs included a need for: recognition; feeling valued; on the job education and training; workload variety and spread; payment for out of pocket expenses eg transport; not to be isolated from other workers; involvement in workplace social and team building events; a choice of roles; sympathetic supervision; formal acknowledgment of their efforts; and opportunities to add to their curriculum vitae (CVs) through worthwhile achievements.

Local ACT MP, Richard Prebble, had agreed to address the February 1997 forum and the Press was duly informed and invited to attend. The forum opened in considerable anticipation of some blunt speaking. But Norma Taylor later described Mr Prebble as something of a “pussy cat,” reflecting perhaps some disappointment in his address. Also in February John Consedine replaced Jenny Greenslade as Chairperson. However, in turn she still remained on the Executive. A Welcoss Working Party of three on bi-culturalism was agreed to given the increase of the importance emerging issues around bi-culturalism and the Treaty of Waitangi. It was noted that Welcoss had a largely a Pakeha/European membership which served, in the majority, Pakeha/European groups. The Working Party concluded that such a sub-committee was not the way to go. Meeting Treaty obligations would need a collective commitment. A trained facilitator to work with the members was believed to be a good lead off. This was done in August under the guidance of Waitangi Network adviser, Jeff Drane. Welcoss members then attended a later Network Waitangi forum in October 1998. At this considerable value was reported on in ways to progress a bi-cultural journey.

Youth was the topic for the March forum with a sizable turn out of 34 members to hear Children & Young Persons Service Youth Justice Coordinator, Allan McRae; Police Youth Aid spokesman, Sergeant Tony Moore; Nga Taurahere ki Poneke Coordinator, Robert Te Whare; Te Whare Whakapakari Coordinator, Andrea McKenzie; Strathmore Community Base worker, Liz Solomona; and Services for Youth Coordinator, Beth Gallego outline their roles and the issues they dealt with. Topics covered included cannabis use, truancy from school, youth offending related rehabilitation programmes, anger management schemes, crime prevention, and education including alternative programmes for suspended secondary school students.

Wellington City Councillors Rex Nicholls, Chris Parkin, and Andy Foster together with several City Council officers participated in a lively housing debate at Welcoss' again well attended April forum. Attendees included members of the Wellington Housing Association of Tenants, council housing tenants, and representatives from a number of local community agencies. City Council officers were adamant that no decision had been yet made regarding the Council's ongoing provision of low cost housing. In response, tenants reiterated fears about perceived past failures of "market forces" and the corporate model in regard to low cost housing provision and management. Fears of increased discrimination against refugee families should the Council exit its housing role in the city were also raised. But Councillor Foster said both the City Council and ratepayers needed to retain an open mind on how future housing issues were managed. He indicated that subsidy levels, the Council's ability to be flexible in responding to housing needs, what might fill the provider gap if the Council exited from housing provision and management, and whether the Wellington City Council was the best source of quality low cost housing all needed to be considered before final decisions were made.

In May NZCOSS sought Welcoss cooperation in a survey to define what mental health services were available in Wellington. Mental health issues had emerged nation wide and included difficulties in obtaining treatment and care, a lack of qualified medical specialists, and a lack of funding for community based support services. But NZCOSS wanted a more specific picture from each region. The result showed that the city had a lack of supported housing. As such a large group of mental health consumers were falling through the cracks. Also, the few boarding establishments available were wary of taking in residents with mental health issues. The Regional Health Authority's (RHA's) increase in funding for home based care was considered a cheap cost saving option that was inadequate to meet the housing needs of those with mental health issues. Additionally a problem with medication non compliance was found in Welcoss' research while a local rapid response team appeared not only not to be functioning well but looked as if it was in a process of demise. Placing the issue all on the City Council's shoulders was not favoured as the best solution. Welcoss members felt that City Council housing complexes for people with psychiatric disabilities was not the answer. If the City Council did proceed down this path it was felt that it could be facing considerable problems ahead. One possible approach put up was a City Council appointed Director of Mental Health Services who would consider the full range of needs and potential solutions.

In July a Welcoss visit to the new Multicultural Services Centre was deferred as the new joint agency premises in Webb Street had yet to be finished. As at the start of 2013, the group remained in Webb Street despite a shift out for a period in between.

1998 did not start off well. Over the Christmas period the City Council moved to relocate tenants in the relocated Betty Campbell Complex. The new site was on the second floor of the Harbour City Centre in Lambton Quay. The move was organised without the consultation that Welcoss had previously sought. But Welcoss agreed to the proposed shift in May. However, some tenants had targeted alternative premises in Ghuznee Street and Welcoss also agreed to look at this option. The issue of relocation continued throughout much of the year until July. At this time Welcoss opted for 75 Ghuznee street for the site of its new offices along with three other former Betty Campbell Street tenants. Business meetings would also shift to a meeting room at the site.

Welcoss pressure on the City Council on the housing issue resulted in Mayor Mark Blumsky addressing the February 1998 meeting. He gave assurances that his Council intended to remain a provider of quality low cost housing in the city. He warned that after the coming elections in October that year a newly elected council may adopt a different approach. He said that the Council's role was a provider of last resort but even then it never seems to have sufficient stock or vacancies to meet demand. He also told those present that City Councillors were reluctant to step in just to take up any slack in a lack of servicing housing demand by central government. Mayor Blumsky confirmed that current City Council thinking on housing involved priority setting for the fit elderly, refugees, people with psychiatric issues needing low levels of support, emergency assistance, and others with multiple disadvantages which may affect their ability to participate in the open rental market. Students, itinerants, migrants, and the more frail elderly were considered a lesser priority.

The March 1998 Executive Committee met in the new Webb Street premises of the Multi Cultural Centre with each group giving a presentation on their role and outlining their respective issues. The April topic was around hazards of increased computer use. Again with computer use now general, and standard in most offices and homes, and the turn out of nine people must have seemed disappointing. Occupational over use syndrome (OOS) was the main issue of concern at the forum and the small attendance listened carefully as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) spokesperson, David Appleby outlined just what OOS was, how it occurred and how it could be alleviated or treated.

The Minister of Youth Affairs, The Hon. Deborah Morris, returned to the theme of youth in June. Then she laid out the Government's plan of action on youth development and empowerment. For a ministerial address the attendance of just 21 was again just a little disappointing. She addressed central government intent regarding motivating youth, employment, communicating with youth, education, building self respect, health, and prevention of self harm and suicide.

Mental health returned to the agenda with an again smallish Welcoss turn out in July to hear Welcoss' own nominee to Project ABLE, Kevin Hackwell of the Downtown Community Ministry, provide an up to date on mental health service provision in Wellington. His address covered a terms of reference for an ongoing Mental Health Service Advisory Panel once the project itself was wound up. But he was concerned that pending cuts to local Health Board budgets did not auger well for mental health service provision in the capital and surrounding region. He warned that if implemented, the cuts would have an adverse impact on clients, their support families and caregivers and community provider agencies alike.

Impacts on people and communities of an aging population (some 50% 45 years old or more by 2051) was the topic under review at the August Welcoss forum. It was presented by Department of Labour Local Employment Coordinator, Chairperson of the Volunteer Centre and Chairperson of the Mature Employment Wellington Trust, Roger Tweedy. One issue of note was that older men tended to look for paid employment rather than volunteer their services for free. Mr Tweedy said that an opportunity to start redefining just what comprised the elderly sector was looming. He said that middle age and retirement together with raising the profile of the future of work and its integration with the aging process would present itself the following year which was the United Nations (UN) Year for Older Persons.

The first meeting at the new Welcoss headquarters (HQ) at 75 Ghuznee Street hosted a presentation on Te Tiriti of Waitangi impacts on local community organisations. Smaller groups then looked at what had been done by their own organisations in implementing Tiriti obligations in their work and how best these could be included in the future.

Future central government support for umbrella type community organisations such as NZCOSS (representing community groups operating at the local and grass roots level), the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Societies (representing national bodies) and the National Christian Council of Social Services (NZCCSS) featured at the first Network forum in 1999. The matter had become important with the Government indicating changes to the way funding of community services was to be carried out in future. The Government seemed to be heading back to an approach of funding at local branch level rather than working through national bodies. It seemed to be becoming less enamoured of providing contracts where it was perceived such contracts did not meet specific services promoted by the Government. While the national bodies in question pursued policy advisory roles through to central government the Government itself indicated that it did not feel disposed to purchasing policy advice nor, therefore, to provide support. The three umbrella groups opted to complete a survey for the whole of the social services sector to provide data on the size and scope of each of the groups and their membership. Again just over a dozen members were on hand to grapple with news of the threat to their own umbrella organisation. But for two or three exceptions this was sadly symptomatic of Welcoss attendances over the last 12-15 months. The trend remained much the same for several months following. Forums pertaining to community wage issues, the future funding environment, changes to workplace accident insurance (ACC), Opposition political parties' social welfare policies, the wants and needs of Wellington's younger people, community sector training, and lottery grant funding drew only small numbers of attendees. Given the difficulties being experienced from members to obtain sustained funding and the profile youth issues had just the year before, the failure of forums on these two topics to attract bigger attendances was disappointing to say the least. One exception was a Network forum in May to consider the contents of the City Council's proposed annual plan. Then it was standing room only. Such were the numbers it proved impossible to get a full attendance list.

Regarding the funding issue, a key problem was iterated as being absences of sound working relationships between central government and community and voluntary organisations and a lack of a well defined framework for community funding. Even at that time central and local government retraction of social services funding was becoming apparent as it still is some 12 years on.

Earlier on 2 February a map for Welcoss activity for the rest of 1999 was tabled. Chairman, Kevin Hackwell said he believed that Welcoss could do much more to raise issues to take directly to the Government, the Wellington City Council and the public. A regular article in the weekly newspaper, City Voice, was suggested. So too was the allocation of individuals on the Executive a list of Network members for a round of direct visits. The concept was to gauge member organisations' perceptions of the usefulness of Welcoss and what other benefits might be added to Welcoss activity. This idea was deferred until March but received the go ahead at that point.

In April Welcoss proposed a different approach to the Wellington City Council's idea of installing of surveillance cameras in the central city as a way of increasing citizens' safety. Welcoss took the view that surveillance cameras would only drive the problems elsewhere and it was not believed that the central city was where most of the issues lay. Instead, Welcoss proposed funding for more Maori wardens, more night shelters, combating drug use, and keeping popular youth centres open for longer. The matter of realising safer city streets was an ongoing one through the year. Surveys of younger people were conducted and suggestions emerged that private security firms already operating in the city could perhaps coordinate their work more effectively. Three Welcoss members agreed to put their suggestions to the quarterly meeting of the Wellington Safer Community Council (WSSC) at the end of July. After that meeting Welcoss was invited to appoint its own representative to the Council and Anne Town took on the role. By the end of the year frustrations at attempts to make progress were raised with the Mayor by Mrs Town. She said that neither the WSSC nor the City Council appeared to be working all that well together. Some mayoral suggestions had never been put to the WSSC for consideration while the goals of both the Mayor and the WSSC seemed far apart.

Yet another matter of concern was the demise of the Wellington Community Health Council originally set up under the Wellington Area Health Board. This had met regularly since 1997. But along the way the Health Board had abandoned community consultation. It was felt that the Community Health Council's passing left Wellington without a suitable representative forum to discuss health and disability issues.

Interest in the City Council's annual plan in 1999 was intense as there were fears of Council cut backs in community funding. Welcoss lobbied hard to retain existing levels of funding to community groups. Through its wider Network, Welcoss generated six times more submissions from voluntary agencies arguing for the Council to retain its current spending levels. The efforts amounted almost to a coordinated campaign and paid off with funding to be kept at previous year's levels. In respect of changes to funding criteria putting additional pressure on community groups the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) and the Lottery Board were seeking more specific and more up to date financial information from applicants. Welcoss agreed to approach the Department of Internal Affairs and the Lottery Board with offers to preview proposed new forms and liaise with their members when changes to funding application criteria were being debated.

Before the end of 1999 long serving member Norma Taylor indicated she would no longer be attending Executive meetings the following year. But she would continue to participate in the Network forums. The value of her past input was passed with universal acclaim.

The year 2000 heralded the arrival of new Executive Committee member, Jan Pike, representing the Johnsonville Community Centre. As at 2013 Jan still served Welcoss on the Executive and in 2014 agreed to take on the Treasurer's duties. At that time she came onto the Committee she represented both the Community Accounting Mentoring Service (CAMS) and the Johnsonville Community Centre. Helen Dawick (City Council) and Bryan Hay (Department of Child, Youth and Family Services or CYPS) attended in an ex officio, but nevertheless most welcome, capacity.

By this time Welcoss was already looking at mentoring the establishment of annual auditing and accounting advice and assistance for voluntary community groups. This work was to lead to the Community Accounting Mentoring Service (CAMS) becoming a reality in the early years of the following decade. Initially CAMS operated under the Welcoss umbrella for a number of years before branching out on its own. Work on the project was ongoing throughout the year 2000 and into the following decade. Initial focus was on getting information about the structure and working processes in an Adelaide based model. Accounting and financial reporting standards had been constantly becoming increasingly demanding of skill and time. This was being especially felt in respect of the amount of financial data required for future funding applications. The trend for greater detail in financial reporting requirements has continued has continued through to the end of this section of the history of Welcoss.

Growing workloads and increased complexity of client needs had already triggered a need for access to more lower level management training for community group staff and volunteers. And Welcoss had taken up the cudgel. By the beginning of the year Blanchard Training had been found to be willing to provide suitable courses for those interested. As well, a challenging incidents course run by Capital Coast Health was offered free of charge to interested community groups. Even though Blanchard Training, had yet to finalise its year's programme (which it was doing with Welcoss input), some 20 organisations had already signalled their wish to participate. Subsequent training was highly regarded by attendees.

Welcoss input into the job prescription and advertising for the position of a new Wellington City Council Manager of Community Services had been agreed to by the City Council following discussions with the Council's chief executive officer and two senior Council managers. Less successful was Welcoss's lobbying for the Council to retain its recreation oriented activities from its Community Services group. This even though Welcoss had been previously advised this would not happen. Welcoss was concerned at what might happen to remaining services including community development advisers and staff working in road safety and youth services. In April some 11 forum attendees were addressed by Carolyn Wait of NZCOSS on a project to be managed by NZCOSS with the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (NZFVWO) and the NZ Christian Council of Social Services (NZCCSS) to explore the possibility for a compact between sector umbrella groups and the Government. If the idea gained traction it would be probably based on the United Kingdom model. One issue was that there appeared to be little agreement outside the social services sector itself as to what the sector actually involved.

Traction appeared to be slipping in the work of the Wellington Safer Community Council (WSCC) with a number of focus groups having to be cancelled through lack of participation. The Welcoss representative on the WSCC believed the group was struggling.

Those views got further backing when the next quarterly meeting of the WSCC too had to be cancelled.

A Wellington Public Health Forum had been previously advocated in order to achieve a consumer voice into public health policy and delivery. Forum spokesperson and organiser, Frances Acey, was received at the June Executive meeting. Here Welcoss agreed to: provide a representative to the Forum; undertake cooperation with the Forum through the Welcoss Executive Officer; ensure an ongoing exchange of newsletters; assist in the development of the Forum; and act as a co-sponsor if appropriate such as facilitating a public meeting. This role was one that Welcoss had already proved itself well adept at doing in the past.

Maria Phelan tabled the completed oral history of Welcoss, a project she had started the previous year, and was thanked for her work. Less welcome was news of a second year pending in a row of a financial deficit. The Wellington City Council had already declined to make up the previous shortfall for a salary grant when it allocated a further \$1,400 for the next year. An application to Community Post for a grant to cover the cost of the newsletter mail out too had proved unsuccessful. Subsequent grants from the T. G. McCarthy Trust (\$2,600) for newsletter costs, and a Lottery Board grant \$5,000 for operational and salary expenses while around the same as previously did help ease the financial situation a little going into the following year.

Changes to business practices within Welcoss to the constitution saw the mooring of the financial year to be between 1 July to the following 30 June. As well the AGM was suggested to be within three months of the end of the new proposed financial year. A monthly financial report was also to be presented to future Executive meetings. Finally the constitution was to acknowledge a formal name change for the organisation to the Wellington Council of Social Services (Welcoss) from the Wellington Social Services Council. While the latter name remained the formally approved title for the organisation the Welcoss acronym had been in wide use for over a decade. The Executive agreed a formal name change would alleviate some existing confusion.

Over the 12 months there was varied enthusiasm for open Network forums. Topics ranged over neglect prevention (13 attendees), work of the Volunteer Centre (11), securing a compact between the social services sector and the Government (11), health care provision for those having difficulty in achieving access to services (21), strengthening families (11), the International Year of Volunteers (20), and a Wellington Community Law Centre update (13). Early in the following year (2001) the Executive considered a move to lunch time forums in order to attract larger attendances than had been the average trend over the last two years. From a high average of around 30 in the early to middle part of the decade, the average had fallen to between 12-13 by the year 2000.

2001-2010 (With An Addendum For 2011-2013) When Planes Fell, Buildings Leaked, Banks Failed, The Earth Moved & “The Cup” Came Home

Both internationally and nationally the years 2001 to 2012 can be best described as tumultuous. The decade's turbulence began in September 2001 with the 9/11 led Al Qaeda attacks on the United States. The martyrdom of the Al Qaeda agents destroyed New York's twin Trade Centre towers, severely damaged the Pentagon, and killed the passengers and crews of four commercial airliners not to mention considerable numbers of down town New York office dwellers and firefighters. The action of the terrorists directly led to allied and NATO military invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The former was to locate and destroy Iraq's perceived piles of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The latter was to hunt down the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks and Al Qaeda head, Osama Bin Laden. Iraq's WMDs proved to be figments of imagination of the then President of the United States, George Bush, and his key advisers. But Osama Bin Laden was eventually brought to book in 2012 when he was killed in a covert United States special forces “black operation” raid in Pakistan. In the intervening years both Iraq and Afghanistan were completely destabilised. The withdrawal of Western troops from both nations (including contingents from New Zealand) before the end of the period under review left each nation in turmoil while also subject to ongoing dissidence and turf wars, and in a state of uncertain instability.

Along the way, one New Zealand soldier won a Victoria Cross in Afghanistan while several others were killed in the fighting there. Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan were left in a better state than they were found when invaded. Some commentators might even say they were left much worse off.

Dissent affected much of the middle east over the period. Popular uprisings in Egypt, Morocco, and Libya replaced their governments and became known as the Arab Spring. By the close of this chapter of Welcoss yet a further and even more savage uprising was in mid stride in Syria. 2008-09 heralded a massive economic recession which affected much of the world. Banks in the United States and the United Kingdom offering easy to get prime mortgage loan schemes folded or were bailed out by their various governments. Some industries folded and millions lost their jobs and in many cases their homes. Other industries such as the United States vehicle manufacturing industry and some larger banks had to be bailed out in order to hold back an oncoming tide of financial devastation and job losses. Although Australia and New Zealand did not escape Scot free they survived better than many. The New Zealand Government did have to introduce belt tightening. As such the public sector felt the scythe the most. However, these measures paled beside the austerity measures resorted to by the European Union. The economies, hence the governments, of Greece, Italy, Spain and Cyprus faced insolvency. In the end even the strong French and German economies were not shielded from the falling value of the Euro.

In this country the return of a National Government in 2008 at a time of world recession immediately put pressure on central government support for the social welfare sector. Central government funding became tighter with access to local government agency offices becoming harder. The voluntary sector was faced, yet again, with having to do more with less.

Competition among voluntary social service support groups for even scarcer funds became more acute. Within 12 months of Welcoss' 60th anniversary celebrations, Wellington's Super Grans service faced shut down. The Salvation Army too was cutting back on staff and services. In 2011 the Somali Council supporting the city's Somali refugee community lost its health sector based funding. It was eventually able to keep going only through the late appearance of a private sector benefactor.

A shortage of public monies from central and local government sources were exacerbated by two major negative events. The first of these dark clouds to emerge was the outcome of building code changes in the early 1990s. Both the codes and some of the newer materials used in the construction of new homes and residential apartment buildings allowed many of the new structures to leak over time. Resulting damage ran into tens of millions of dollars. Fingers were angrily pointed at the legislation that allowed the situation, local authority building inspectors for failing to ensure sounder construction techniques, architects and builders for faulty design and construction, and the producers of failed building materials. When the heat went on, many whom the pointing fingers were searching out had vanished overseas. Either that or were already bankrupt or otherwise out of business. Home and apartment owners, local authorities and the Government were the ones left to pick up the costly repair tab.

If central and local government financial resources were not already over stretched enough, two massive earthquakes devastated Christchurch in September 2010 and February 2011 and left their cupboards even barer. The impact of the two quakes was to be felt throughout the country. Higher compliance levels against earthquake risks and downstream earthquake assessments of public and commercial buildings saw the public and private sector in every region of the country facing huge building strengthening costs. Public infrastructure replacement in Canterbury had to be paid for. In Wellington, very much an earthquake prone city, the pressure really went on. Even the revamped Town Hall and City Council offices were earmarked for a costly upgrades. Elsewhere in the city some school buildings which failed to come up to required standards were closed down pending upgrading. Additionally, tenants in some office buildings were also transferred out to temporary safer premises. All insured home and apartment owners faced considerable hikes in their premiums as overseas based re-insurers sought to minimise their losses and any future loss potential from major disasters in this country. Two heavy quakes centred near Wellington in the middle of 2013 served to force home the issue even harder.

Through it all voluntary social service agencies battled on. And battle it was to be. Literally. Funding, housing, poverty and mental health remained at the top of the city's social issues and looked likely to continue to do so in the years ahead. The National Government explored new social service delivery structures including the possibility of allowing the private sector to tender for central government funded social services. Indeed, the Government's 2013 budget heralded a definite move to put more social housing responsibility including both state housing subsidies and stock into the hands of private providers and voluntary social agencies and charities such as the Salvation Army. Largely this was in order to meet a housing demand crisis. That meant that Housing New Zealand (HNZ) itself too would compete for social housing subsidy allocations. The new measure also included ongoing reviews of its own housing stock tenants with up to 3,000 tenants facing eviction over the next three years.

Also Housing New Zealand lost its role in tenancy needs assessments to the Ministry of Social Development. The measure received a mixed bag of responses. Some commentators labelled it a “swings and roundabouts” approach which would do little to alleviate the country's housing problem. There were also some concerns that the \$27 million in subsidies available for housing allocation would not go far enough. Yet others believed that enabling social agencies to be able to incorporate housing provision within its existing mix of social support was a positive step forward.

Organisations involved helping people with mental illnesses find accommodation took a reserved stance pending the release of more finer details on the new move. But they did express some guarded support and would be keen to be able to have access to housing stock. Balancing the potential for better access to housing beyond 2013 for those with mental illness was a Government decision to limit and/or restrict government financial support to family care givers of other afflicted family members. Again it seemed to be a matter of “what one hand giveth the other taketh away.”

Over the post 2000 period more and more cases of extreme child abuse, neglect, and pedophilia, filled our daily newspapers. By 2013 poverty, and particularly child poverty, had also become a real issue throughout the country. It was adjudged in May 2012 that some 270,000 New Zealand children lived in various degrees of poverty. One school in the Wellington region was filmed for television news providing food for children prior to school starting each day and at lunch times because students were arriving without breakfast and hungry. Near the time of wrapping up this history a Private Members Bill in Parliament was seeking a food for schools programme while in the background the National Government itself was considering its own response to the issue. This was announced a short time after the annual Budget announcement. The Government's approach was a partnership proposal between central government, charities, and the private sector. The proposal also included provision of warm clothing in the winter months.

At the street level the period after the new millenium saw cell phones get smaller and smarter and television screens get flatter, lighter and thinner. To cell phones' ability to photograph and video were added more and more functions including internet and personal e-mail access. By the year of Welcoss' 60th celebrations lap top computers too became smaller and lighter while high definition and even 3D were becoming the standard on new television appliances. This followed the re-emergence of 3D on our wide movie screens. The kindal too was a new laptop related appliance allowing users to download books for reading. The new innovation was particularly suitable during times of longated travel.

Our roads saw an increasing profusion of a variety of four wheel drive types. Even luxury vehicle makers such as Mercedes, Lexus, Volvo, and BMW got in on the act. As a result, car manufacturers were starting to reduce the remaining range of models which previously graced many of our highways. New rules also came into force to ensure Japanese imported vehicles conformed to more stringent New Zealand road safety standards while more and more luxury makes were bought up by New Zealand motorists

Over the decade Wellington itself was marketing itself as New Zealand's and one of the world's best movie making hubs. In this regard the Weta label held an international reputation for innovation and quality. The Rings Trilogy, The Hobbit, King Kong and Rin Tin Tin were just four international success which brought movie money and movie stars to the city. At the time of writing there was still more to come including two more Hobbit movies.

For the sports minded, New Zealand staged the World Rugby Cup tournament in 2011 and came away with the Crown after a one point win over France. Interestingly it was France that the All Blacks also met in the final of the inaugural World Cup here in 1987. Wellington was part of the international visitor and match buzz over the period of World Cup matches. Twelve months later it was the turn of our Olympic rowers, yachtsmen and women, cyclists, BMX riders, equestrian heroes and a world class women's shot putter who kept Wellingtonians tuned to their television sets. Less successful over the 10 year period were Wellington's super 15 rugby and National Provincial Rugby Championship franchises, and Australasian competition entries in football or soccer (the Phoenix); and netball (the Pulse).

Arguments over roading verses public transport options to ease traffic congestion into and out of the city through to the Kapiti Coast constantly made our daily newspapers. Plans to speed up traffic to the airport and hospital around the Basin Reserve with a four lane road past the Carillion and a flyover brought plenty of vociferous response from city dwellers. So did other proposals relating to an alternative four lane bypass on the Kapiti Coast from Raumati to Peka Peka and later an Otaki bypass. Yet another roading project was the Transmission Gully alternative route in and out of the capital. At the time of completing this part of the Welcoss history the only certainty was Transmission Gully, a four lane trench past the Carillion (already under construction) and the Raumati to Peka peka bypass. The Basin Reserve flyover was looking a little more likely with amendments in local body election year (2013).

For a while too Wellingtonians' attention was divided over a scheme for a giant "Wellywood" sign on Mapuia's hill slope to greet air travellers into the city. The concept was to symbolise the city's movie connection as did the famous Hollywood sign in California. Opposition on this occasion saw a back down by the scheme's proponents with a more generic sign being the outcome. This followed a public competition to select the most innovative and most suitable design.

Finally the successful passing of the Gay Marriage Bill through Parliament was greeted with general, if not unanimous, support around the country. But perhaps joy was the more prevalent in Wellington and Auckland. At the time most main stream churches remained hesitant if not resistant to officiating at gay marriages. This despite some individual clergy from these churches openly supporting the passing of the legislation. One retired Anglican Bishop wore full regalia when appearing before the select committee hearing submissions on the Bill. During his appearance he advocated strongly in the Bill's favour. Anglican diocese around the country, barring one or two very conservative areas, seemed close to some form of compromise over this and the ordination of female bishops by the end of 2014.

2001-2012: Summary

The period 2001-through to mid 2013 was akin to more of what goes round comes round. But only faster if that were at all possible. Funding and housing remained the big issues. Macro economic decline, or at best struggle, meant more voluntary agencies were competing for less. Nevertheless NZ Lottery Board allocations, various trust grants, and poker machine hand outs along with annual and/or one off fund raising events kept voluntary agency activity ticking over. Issues around problem gambling saw Welcoss establish the Alternative Funding Project to explore other sources of agency funding than through poker machine profit allocations.

Mounting user pressure over the period meant, however, that services were stretched tight. In some cases it was stretched too tight. University students and growing numbers of unemployed middle class Wellingtonians and regional white collar workers added to the queues at food banks. Thus stretching their limited resources even further. Many newcomers to the food bank queues were among the hundreds of public servants let go as a result of the Government's austerity measures from 2009. In May 2013 the weekly newspaper "The Wellingtonian" reported on its front page of new pressures being placed on voluntary social support agencies by growing youth job statistics. This pressure was especially marked by those agencies providing food and food parcels. A youth unemployment rate for Wellington of 25% (15-19 year olds) was starting to bite hard by the middle of 2013. Lots of new faces in the queues at the Soup Kitchen were noted. Many were younger "outsiders" coming to experience life in the "big smoke" but ended up having to "live it rough." The Night Shelter too was seeing an increase in the numbers of younger people needing emergency or transitional accommodation. Over 1,000 additional enrollments in Evolve, a health service provider for under 24 year olds, were reported for May. Depression, anxiety, stress and a declining feeling of self worth among the city's younger population were becoming marked.

The Somali Council, which supported refugee families from that country, lost its health funding source in 2011. But it was saved by a private sector donor. In April 2013 the founding Lower Hutt branch of the Super Grans agency announced through the pages of the Dominion Post that it was almost "broke." The agency was established in 1994 to provide a mentoring service to struggling families through tutoring life skills such as budgeting and cooking. The newspaper reported that the agency had to halve its salaried staff hours to 20 hours a week, terminate its lease on its three offices, and drastically reduce mileage allowances for its volunteers in what was described as a desperate move to survive. From a surplus of over \$113,158 12 months prior the agency was down to its last \$25,000 with no more central government funding anticipated until July that year. Like many voluntary agencies in the region it was finding grants from various sources drying up. It had previously been on a \$120,000 three year grant from the Ministry of Social Development. The group closed its doors in July 2013 but was looking to re-generate itself in a slightly different form.

The Salvation Army too faced the loss of over 20 budget advisers around the same time as the Super Grans announcement. The Dominion Post again reported that the Community Response Fund which was set up to help organisations providing social services to deal with economic recession was due to expire in July 2013. The Salvation Army had received some \$2,600,000 from the fund of which some went towards funding 20 additional budget advisers to cover a huge 230 percent increase in demand since the start of the recession.

The role of the advisers involved preparing struggling families to become self sufficient. The Salvation Army was quoted as confirming that while the life of the Fund appeared to be indeterminate, demand remained at its current high level.

In June 2013 the Board of Wellington ICT which was represented on the Welcoss Executive was forced through a lack of funding to abandon its contracts with the Wellington City Council to manage the Council's computer hubs at its Arlington, Central Park, and Newtown apartment complexes; together with an additional service contract. Six WICT staff were to be stood down as a result of the move. The decision was made despite the project's huge success (in 2012 the organisation won the NZ Open Source Award for its apartment complex computer hub concept). For some time the the organisation had been dipping into its reserve funds to support its services. As well, it had been unable to find sustainable alternative funding sources including partnering with other groups.

Yet another organisation facing considerable uncertainty over its funding needs was the Community Accounts Mentoring Service, or CAMS. This group was initially established and sponsored under the Welcoss umbrella in 2003. Its role was to advise and mentor community groups of all types through annual accounting compliance requirements. By 2012 it had earned a sound reputation throughout a wide range of voluntary based not for profit organisations. These included sports clubs and art groups as well as welfare agencies. CAMS was a distinctly unique service and got some initial support and funding from the Ministry of Social Development which saw some significant roll out potential for the model across the country. A three year funding cycle gave CAMS some degree of certainty until 2012 when it received funding for only the next 12 months. Again in 2013 it applied for three years of funding but again missed and was facing considerable uncertainty about the 2013-044 outcome of the Council's cost cutting deliberations.

One huge success story was that of Kaibosh. This group organised a collection of surplus food stocks from retailers around the city. With cool storage on hand and a refrigerated truck to preserve collected food in transition, Kaibosh proved an effective conduit of food to food banks. Its success saw it win a national Green Ribbon environmental award and get backing for a start up in Auckland.

Housing issues and particularly those around Wellington's homeless and to meet mental health needs grew steadily more acute from 2001. Youth issues also climbed

By start start of the period Welcoss was working closely with the Wellington City Council on various social service issues and projects. By 2001, the Council had become the group's major funding source for salaries of the Chairperson and coordinators; and to finance the costs of agreed project activity, office rentals and office equipment. Monthly Executive and Welcoss Network meetings were located in Wellington City Council committee rooms and were attended regularly by Council officers.

Through the 12 year period post 2000 Welcoss established quarterly meetings with the City's Mayors. These raised issues of mutual interest and concern and a vehicle to check progress against previously launched initiatives. In some work areas Welcoss assumed a distinct leadership role.

Examples of co-operative activity over the period included Welcoss involvement in the Council's Homelessness and Affordable Housing projects. From 2012 Welcoss was also lobbying the City Council hard in efforts to ensure a casino free wellington. By mid 2013 some business interests were already looking jealously at a proposed new convention centre for Auckland funded by the Sky City Casino there and considered the possibility of similar gains in the capital. On 16 July, 2013 it was revealed that SkyCity had put up a casino in Wellington as an option for agreeing to provide Auckland with a new convention centre. The condition failed to gain support.

Rather than an ad hoc arm of central government as it was at its inception in 1952, Welcoss had assumed an umbrella role for the Council and a conduit to the city's numerous voluntary social service groups. The degree of the cooperative relationship between the Wellington City Council and Welcoss was nothing new. Indeed it had been growing apace since David Robinson's arrival as the City's Community Development Officer in the 1970s. 1986-87 even had two City Council representatives, Sue Driver and Graham Wilson, operating as Welcoss Chairs. Against this trend the involvement of, and link through to, key central government departments and ministries had either dried up or become difficult. By the end of the period government agencies for housing, health, social development, education and both Maori and Pacific Affairs were no longer around the Welcoss table or provided easy access to their officials let alone their Ministers as was once the case.

By 2001, gone from active Welcoss involvement and participation, at least at Executive Committee level, were most of the individual Church organisations such as the Wellington Central Baptist Church, and both Catholic and Presbyterian Social Services. The Downtown City Ministry is today absent from Welcoss' table while the activities of the City Mission's representative is restricted to the wider Network meeting attendances. That organisation too was most reluctant to fund its representative to the 2012 annual NZCOSS conference. Also, more than a few voluntary agencies that once graced Welcoss meetings and forums had also faded from existence. Or if they still retained their membership they were no longer visibly active or even attenders at monthly meetings.

The nature of Welcoss business over most of the years post 2000 was led by Kevin Hackwell of the Downtown Community Ministry (1999-2001); William Holden of the Wellington Housing Trust (2002) which is another still operating group no longer involved at Executive level with Welcoss; Gaynor Nairn of the Alzheimers' Society (2003-2007); and Jocelyn Frances O'Kane of Wellhealth (2007-). Activities were organised around monthly business meetings of the Executive followed by a morning tea break joined by representatives of other member groups prior to a round table Network. The latter was to share triumphs and problems and be informed of matters of mutual interest. Through the period special forums with guest speakers (including central government officials and Cabinet Ministers) to discuss issues and in particular new agency activities or upcoming central government changes faded. Occasionally special appearances came from teams from major political parties to gather data; and also City Council officers to outline matters directly affecting Welcoss.

By the end of 2012 one blackening cloud on the horizon was looming ever closer. This related to proposals for a possible major change in the region's local and regional government structure.

As at mid year in 2013 there were several proposals considering a combined regional structure aka the Auckland super city concept. Up to the 2013 local body elections there was a Greater Wellington Regional Council and separate local authorities for Wellington, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua Cities, the Kapiti Coast District and three Wairarapa councils. Over the Rimutaka Ranges, the three Wairarapa Councils opted to put up a proposal to combine and stay clear of any greater Wellington region amalgamation. On the eastern side of the Ranges two proposals emerged to join all remaining authorities under one banner with alternative structures including also with, or without, the Wairarapa authorities. The status quo also remained a possibility. What outcome evolves down the track was at the time of writing unknown. There were both opportunities and threats involved for Welcoss or its replacement (if any) from the review. Under a local authority amalgamation both a complete abandonment of Welcoss or a regional wide social service support umbrella replacement with greater responsibilities and attendant workloads became possible. 2007-13 Chair, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, noted this in her item for the final Welcoss newsletter of 2012 that that proposed local government structure options for the Wellington region did not necessarily bode well for the future existence of Welcoss in the longer term. She wrote that Welcoss was fortunate to have the support and confidence of the Wellington City Council. Council funding was also assured until June 2015. After that the landscape was likely to be very different. Jocelyn Frances O'Kane stated that while the Wellington City Council currently appreciated the contribution that an umbrella group like Welcoss makes, including active participation in City Council projects, a bigger local government body may not share that same view. The Chair also pointed to real and ongoing funding cuts to community social sector participants and changes to current charity allocation policies. As such she said that Welcoss' survival in any new and bigger local government environment depended on the need to work smarter.

The approaching local government restructuring cloud may, in the end, be either white or black. It is a matter of watch this space. Already soon after the 2013 local body elections Welcoss was quickly asked to provide greater future transparency in accounting for City Council funding use and to seek increased participation of the city's bigger welfare providers.

By its 60th year, Welcoss had developed a well functioning executive with respectful and collegial relationships, an open, transparent approach, a clear strategy, good policies and capable staff. The group's current streamlined strategy had been developed since Jocelyn Frances-O'Kane took the Chair in 2007. The plan at the time was to make Welcoss again more visible and accessible within Wellington's social services community. This was so it could take up its function as the prime umbrella group to inform, connect with and supports the social services and community sector. Some fine tuning was undertaken in the ways of meeting management. The monthly meeting process was divided into three parts: the executive meeting; the wider Welcoss Network forum; and occasional calls to action and special external presentations in the post noon slot (as already outlined). City Council annual planning presentations, structural reviews and project progress were some examples of this approach in action. Often these project reports related to those Welcoss was actively involved with such as the Social Services Mapping, Homelessness and Affordable Housing Projects. Another was when Welcoss was asked to pull together a submission along the lines of the proposal to charge for police checks in February 2013.

The aspect of Welcoss supporting largely City Council initiatives and participating in projects that added real value to its members, the sector and to Wellington City as a whole formed an additional part of Welcoss' business strategy at the time. Jocelyn reported that Welcoss' success in this aspect of its role has seen the group called on by the City Council as part of its strategy to build relationships across the sector.

In the Welcoss report back to City Communities in March 2012 the increasing demand on Welcoss time was noted. Along with others such as Community Law, Volunteer Wellington and Multicultural Services, Welcoss was invited to apply to the City Council for increased funding when their three year funding was being discussed. This was in order to recognise the contribution Welcoss was making and to ensure that it could continue to do so.

As Welcoss' first 60 years was reviewed during its jubilee celebrations it was revealed that Welcoss' work had not really changed over its lifetime. Sadly that meant also that little progress had been made to alleviate the bigger social issues such as housing. The reason was given that this was largely through the group no longer being invited to the table with central government in particular and its agencies to engage meaningfully in finding ways to make housing affordable for all while also agreeing actions and outcomes and holding each other accountable for finding solutions to the more intractable of our social problems.

The City Council increased Welcoss funding from 1 July 2013 and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) developed and agreed with the Chair's employer to enable her to undertake 10 hours a week of paid work on behalf of the organisation.

As per above, as at June 2013 Welcoss was heavily involved in four significant projects. The first was around trials for revised financial reporting standards for small organisations arising initially as a local project looking to produce a certificate of financial competence. At the time of writing Welcoss was taking the opportunity to take the next steps to trial the standards in a pilot programme that was to take 12 months (June 2013 to July 2014) and an evaluation following that.

The City Council's Te Mahana Project to end city homelessness by 2020 was the second. The project's initial workshop took place in May 2012 and the Chair has been involved with the steering group working out the next steps since that time.

The third project, the Wellington Regional Affordable Housing Strategy was being co-managed with Councillor, Peter Glensor, from the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The project team also involved Wellington City Council Managers of Housing and Policy; City Councillor, Paul Eagle; and Charmaine Ross and Iris Pahau for the Tangata Whenua. Policy Managers from Greater Wellington Regional Council were also involved. A local workshop was planned for May 30th with the mayors and chief executives from the five Wellington councils and with the three Wairarapa councils copied in to the invitation at this stage. A follow up meeting was organised with the Mayor of Kapiti in June 2013. To hope that it was possible to come up with a coherent strategy on housing that was affordable for all was a huge one. Certainly it was one of the biggest projects that Welcoss had been a part of for some years. The outcome should make interesting reading in any historical coverage of the succeeding period for Welcoss after this volume.

A year out from the 60th celebrations, the City Council (WCC) had also invited Welcoss to take on a leading community partnership role in mapping Wellington City's social services. The project was launched to build a greater community resilience in face of any future adversities including natural disasters and harsh economic times. The project was also attempting to: obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of the funding and delivery of social support services in Wellington; identify gaps in the current funding and delivery of social services; and provide solutions to enhance the availability, funding and delivery of these same services.

A Welcoss sub-group was then set up to look further at how best Welcoss could assist .

Over its most recent 12 year period Welcoss had also taken the initiative on a number of issues on its own account. Ensuring a casino free Wellington, and supporting a national campaign for a living wage were two examples in addition to the alternative funding project. Welcoss also continued to be represented on the New Zealand Council of Social Services by its Chairperson. Involvement in NZCOSS helped Welcoss maintain links between both bodies while also enabling it to take Wellington social concerns to a national forum as appropriate. In return monthly attendance by NZCOSS representatives at Welcoss monthly meetings provided early alerts to members to upcoming issues. This was particularly valuable when high level changes in the sector were ever in central government's pipeline. Pending changes to the Charities Act and its administration was one notable example of this. Central government consideration of allowing the private sector to tender for social service contracts was yet another. NZ Council of Social Services Chief Executive, Ros Rice, was most concerned at the emergence of this latter matter. She told the February 2012 Welcoss Network meeting that aspects of the Government's planned changes to current social welfare provision had the potential to undermine the extent to how the nation saw itself as a civilised society. Ms Rice informed the Welcoss Network of the vulnerability of those New Zealanders who were already hard put to care for themselves being exacerbated by the potential of a move which could well turn the nation's welfare system completely on its head. The NZCOSS Chief Executive told the meeting "Developing better ways of working. Yes. But not helping people unable to help themselves is a completely different prospect." And she expressed her concern for the the unemployed, sickness beneficiaries and single parents in particular should the proposal ever become a reality.

In 2004 the AGM paid tribute to Mrs Norma Taylor who had recently passed away. A long serving secretary, Mrs Taylor attended her first Wellington District Welfare Committee meeting in March 1968. Born in Wanganui to teacher parents, Mrs Taylor had a background in working with deaf children and supporting those with severe hearing loss. She worked in the former Department of Agriculture including writing for the women's section in the Journal of Agriculture and was also involved in helping set up Country Girls Clubs. These were the years where women, let alone working women generally, were not always well received by male colleagues in some workplaces. The Department of Agriculture being one of these at the time in Mrs Taylor's opinion. Further notes on Norma Taylor's involvement with the WDWC and the WSSC are included within the next section.

2001-012: The Years In Detail

2001 started with an Executive Committee planning day at the end of January. The focus was a review of where Welcoss was presently going and whether or not members were happy with that direction. Outcomes of the discussions included: a need to sell the organisation within the sector in a much stronger and more proactive way; using new opportunities to remain relevant; recognising that a gap existed in membership with Maori community service groups and that there was a need to strengthen multi-cultural links generally; making better use of traditional central government partners ie the Department of Child Youth & Family Services [CYPS] and the Department of Work & Income [WINZ]; strengthening Welcoss links with NZCOSS; upgrading Welcoss' technology; maintaining a good relationship with the Wellington City Council and its Community Services group; and acknowledging the ongoing issue of funding as a major issue in the sector.

Priorities for the year ahead were determined so to: progress the concept of an accounting advisory service for voluntary groups, looking at instituting lunchtime forums, complete a submission to the Wellington City Council on social policy, raise the organisation's public profile, establish a workable budget for the year, undertake a technology upgrade, participate in the International Year of the Volunteer (IYV), assist in realising lower level management training; place representatives on other network and consulting bodies; and increase links with Maori and other ethnic community groups.

February realised an issue with new Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and the impact of new premium classification units on levies for some health and community service providers. In some cases ACC levies would rise by 50%. The next Welcoss newsletter alerted members of the situation suggesting they might approach ACC with the view to try to have their classification changed to one with lower levies. A letter to the ACC Minister, the Hon Ruth Dyson, was drafted the following month. In it Welcoss advocated on behalf of affected groups. Welcoss also undertook to keep a close watching brief on the matter including taking it up with the Mayor. A possible rent increase for groups using the Ghuznee Street address too raised its head in March. The bottom line for Welcoss being that the organisation could not afford an increase at that time. Already issues had been raised by tenants about a perceived lack of security arrangements for the building.

March reports on Welcoss representations on the State Housing Appeals Authority Panel and the Wellington Safer Community Council (WSCC) were tabled. Welcoss had not been confident that the present approach had been working all that well for some time and recommended a restructure. The final report on the study to ascertain the feasibility and viability of an accounting and auditing mentoring service was tabled at the March meeting. It was then agreed to include an item on the subject in the next newsletter to members.

That not all was always well in the Welcoss paradise emerged in May when Executive Officer, Maria Phelan expressed disappointment that one of the aims for the year of regular separate meetings of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and the Executive Officer had not proceeded was a real negative for overall Welcoss administration. Things took a turn for the better not long after with the then Mayor, Mark Blumsky, expressing his open appreciation for the way meetings with Welcoss providing a good picture of what was happening with Wellington's social services sector.

He said that these meetings had enabled him to direct staff to deal with relevant issues raised with him by Welcoss. Mr Blumsky who had announced he would not be standing for the mayoralty in the coming elections said that Welcoss should continue to diary meetings with the incoming Mayor. Subsequently the new Mayor, Kerry Prendergast, agreed to continue with quarterly meetings with Welcoss. These continued through her three successive terms together with the first three years of her successor, Celia Wade-Brown (2010-2013). In June 2001, the Welcoss Executive Committee agreed that Welcoss be an umbrella body for a new Wellington Community Accounts Mentoring Service (CAMS) to be set up. The reception of a half year report on Welcoss activities drew less enthusiasm with aims to improve cultural and ethnic links, and increase links with NZCOSS and also with central government agencies being reported as yet not having been achieved.

With the current lease of the Ghuznee Street premises up for renewal in a month's time (there was some concern expressed in July that, as yet, there had been no contact from the owners), where Welcoss would be next located seemed up in the air. If the future of Welcoss premises had been forced on its agenda so too had the need for new Executive Committee members. The resignation of Chris Clarke of the Compassion Hospital for another position outside Wellington saw approaches to Youthline, the Multicultural Services Centre, and the Mental Health Consumers Union seeking their interest in coming aboard. It had already been reported that membership renewal rates were down on previous years. As such an increase in wider membership numbers was also considered desirable. Internet connection as a means of communication, while still relatively new, was becoming more widespread and was being looked at by Welcoss as an ideal communication tool. A suggestion to improve the design and appearance of the newsletter was thrown out with most Committee members happy with how the newsletter was presently produced and presented.

With the 2001 AGM out of the way the new financial year started with Bryan Hay of the Department of Child Youth & Family giving notice that he would no longer be able to attend Welcoss meetings in an ex-officio capacity. Mr Hay had been the Department's representative for some time. His involvement followed Welcoss pressure in the latter part of the previous decade to have central government agency ex-officio presence in Welcoss meetings restored. This was after a gradual falling off over a number of previous years. Following Mr Hay's notification Welcoss sought his Department's clarification on whether he would be replaced. But the matter ended for the year with no response forthcoming.

Over 2001 wider Welcoss Network forums had covered topics ranging from the City Council's draft social strategy (10 attendees), Wellington Community Law Centre on various legal matters of wider interest (12), the roles of Wellington City Council Youth Development Advisors (11), Putting poverty on the local government agenda (18), the community and government relationships (14), and tertiary education in the social sector (5).

The matter of social sector relationships with central government was a matter of considerable concern. As such the 14 strong turn out to get an update on the project exploring how these could be developed and improve central government understanding on the role of the voluntary sector in providing social services would have been considered low. However, it was still one of the bigger attendances at forums to date.

Advice that the Wellington Safer Community Council (WSSC) had been wound up and replaced with a “leaders” group was received with mixed emotions by the Welcoss Executive. There had been considerable frustration by attendees at WSSC meetings for some time that the organisation was not working well. But it was felt by Executive members that the issue of crime and crime prevention was still one needing to be addressed. Welcoss was advised that the problem would in all likelihood end up with the Wellington City Council again to deal with anyway.

Welcoss had been fully involved in getting a regional forum underway for IYV activities with Welcoss represented on the ongoing IYV Coordinating Committee. Even better news was that 2001-02 activities would be achieved within budget.

2002 began with a membership of 119 paid up organisations and some 16 individuals. Most medium sized groups in the city (those operating on budgets of between \$40,000 and \$100,000) were members. The least represented on Welcoss appeared to be the smaller groups. A lack of time and resources was put forward as the reason for this. At this time the Downtown Community Ministry had two Committee members represented, the Eastern Suburbs Citizens Advice Bureau one, the Wellington Housing Trust one (whose representative, William Holden, was also the Chairman), the Wellington People's Centre one and the Marsden and Chelsea Trusts one member. The Salvation Army's Community Services Group was a new addition to the Executive Committee. It was also thought that quite a few members who received the newsletter tended to be unaware of just what Welcoss was. Consequently Welcoss resolved to use the newsletter for its own self promotion as well as informing members of trends within the wider social services sector.

In 2002 the Citizens Advice Bureau was reporting people being adversely impacted by rising costs of essentials such as petrol, electricity and supermarket goods. The electricity reforms of the previous decade had promised cheaper power through competition. It appeared the reverse was the new reality with accusations of collusion between suppliers as the reason electricity prices were rising. The good news was that the new Community Accounts Mentoring Service (CAMS) was active helped by a \$7,000 Community Trust of Wellington grant. In July that year the Trust indicated they would fully fund the organisation for the current year. A further \$4,000 Wellington City Council project grant had also been sought to manage the new organisation's book keeping work. This was later achieved. By April 2002 the new body's operating budget was a total of \$22,500 helped in no small way by a City Council strategic grant. CAMS had been a project which had gathered rapid and extensive momentum once the project was launched in 1999. The active and willing support of the Wellington City Council in ensuring the project became a reality was unanimously acknowledged. As well, an initial umbrella agreement between Welcoss and CAMS was extended to up to June 2003-04. In September Welcoss Chairman, William Holden (Wellington Housing Trust) was able to report to the AGM that a mentor for CAMS had been appointed.

Pressure by Welcoss on creating more effective links between the community and the various central agencies realised a commitment from the Department of Work & Income to conduct quarterly community meetings a year to consider ongoing local social issues.

The meetings would be organised by the Department. Concern with the future of community health contracts (whether community groups need to align with a primary health organisation or the district health board) was raised at a consultative meeting with the Capital and Coast District Health Board. A further consultative meeting on the matter was set for late April 2002.

April 2002 was the month that the resignation of Maria Phelan as Welcoss' Executive Officer became official. She had been in the position for six years and had given invaluable service. A farewell party for Maria was agreed to at the end of May. One of her "off site" achievements were tape recordings from extensive interviews with both Wally Lake and Norma Taylor to provide the basis of a Welcoss oral history. Some three tapes (six sides) for each of the two former Welcoss stalwarts were filled with valuable reminiscences. Both sets of tapes were used to provide input into the writing of this history.

In June the issue of central accommodation for community groups raised its head again. The Wellington City Council had recently notified Welcoss that those organisations currently operating from a Victoria Street site would have to move once the building was sold shortly. Councillor Stephanie Cook was to update Welcoss on progress the following month.

For some time Executive Committee meeting structures had informally shifted from previous pure business matters to include a round of updates from Committee members on their own organisations' activities. The process was to eventually lead to a separate wider Welcoss Network. Members of the Network would eventually meet following each Executive Committee meeting to share issues and successes. But at this time it is still a little way off at this point.

Issues with a deteriorating situation within NZCOSS including the closing of the national office of the organisation, a split within the Committee leading to several resignations, the state of the accounts, certain legal obligations, and possible liability of remaining Committee members led to a special meeting of that organisation on 19 September. Welcoss came armed with a number of resolutions around the staffing of the national office. However, these were deferred pending the election of a new Committee. The meeting was tense and Welcoss representative, Margaret Cook, reported back that the situation had also resulted in a split of opinions among the wider membership as well as within the Committee. By the end of July a new Committee had been elected supported by two funding grants of \$35,000 over the year. Welcoss agreed to assist with a COSS regional meeting to update attendees as to what was happening at national level.

Network forums topics over the year included talks on new primary health organisations (PHOs), the Multi Cultural Service Centre, restorative justice, home care, strengthening families CAMS, and central accommodation for voluntary community agencies.

Following a presentation from Frances Acey at the first meeting of 2002 on the role of the Wellington Public Health Forum, it was agreed that space be reserved in each newsletter for a report from the Forum. Wellington Samaritans, Volunteer Wellington, and Age Concern were all approached to test their interest in joining the Welcoss Executive Committee. The timing for additional Executive Committee numbers was spot on as the group had struggled to meet quorum requirements from time to time the year just ended.

Indeed the April meeting proceeded without a quorum present. Committee numbers were further reduced by the end of May with the sudden and unexpected death of the Chairman, Mr William Holden of the Wellington Housing Trust. Deputy Chairperson, Gaynor Nairn (Alzheimers Society), assumed his role in the interim and an appropriate obituary prepared for the next newsletter edition. Later Welcoss approached the City Council seeking approval for a seat plaque in the Volunteers' Garden. The plaque was to be inscribed with *"In memory of William Holden, died 2003, a volunteer who gave and did not count the cost."*

The annual planning forum had been deferred from early in the year until May. At this time Executive Committee members were asked to once again look at the future direction of the organisation. Some apathy had been previously noted together with ongoing subscription deferments. A theme of how Welcoss could be the welfare voice for Wellington was decided upon to guide discussions. Welcoss also sent new Executive Officer, Elsa Dalit, to a Hutt COSS establishment meeting which was well attended. COSS related activities in the Hutt area had up and down histories and Hutt was just emerging from one of the down times with enthusiasm once again on the rise.

The May 2003 meeting of the Executive Committee too was the first at which the attendance of Jocelyn Frances O'Kane was formally recorded in the minutes. She was representing the Wellington's People's Centre in place of Margaret Crook. Jocelyn went on to take the Chair in 2007 and retained the office up to September 2013. She reported to the September 2012 meeting that the People's Centre had no medical services available at present but was being helped out by the Aro Street Medical Centre. The Centre was also dealing with increasing numbers of homeless people seeking help which was willingly given. The need for alternative premises was also of present concern. Other Diamond Jubilee (2012) Committee names whose activities were being recorded in the minutes from early to mid decade either as full Committee members or regular Forum attendees included Jan Pike (Johnsonville Community Centre and later CAMS), and Roger Tweedy (Work & Age and the Miramar Community Centre).

The June Executive Committee meeting approved annual grant applications to the City Council (salary), Lottery Board (salary top up and operational costs), Pub Charity (new printer and paper and cartridge supplies), T. G. McCarthy Trust (newsletter costs) and the NZ Community Trust (computer accounting package). One aspect of Mayoral meetings with Welcoss at the time has now ceased. This being that the record of the meetings go to the Executive Committee for approval with a copy then forwarded to the Mayor's Office. One possible reason being that attendance at these meetings varied considerably. As well, while agreements were reached on ongoing actions the meetings themselves tended to be conducted on an informal basis.

In August Volunteer Wellington Welcoss Executive Committee member, Pauline Harper, reported that her organisation was intending to encourage unemployed older workers and retirees to register with Volunteer Wellington rather than registering with WINZ. She believed the latter would likely do little other than offer training courses not work. She maintained that prejudice against older workers was the real reason that older people had difficulty in finding paid employment. Volunteering would involve older people experiencing meaningful work and activity.

Volunteer Wellington also began “recruiting” volunteers through Val Morgan cinema adverts.

Forum sessions during 2003 included speakers delivering addresses on topics such as the Wellington Public Health Forum, Welcoss planning, the re-development of the Wellington and Keneperu Hospitals, the work of Super Grans, the new Local Government Act, and the responsibilities of the new Electricity Commission.

2004 began with a discussion on the appropriateness in restricting the number of future open Network Forums to two or three together with an additional presentation at the AGM. Forum attendances had not been all that large over the previous year and followed the trend in the previous two years. In the end Welcoss opted to hold a half hour forums, sometimes with guest speakers, after Committee business meetings. Lunch could be provided. The Executive Committee again looked at expanding Committee membership to represent more fully Wellington's social services. As such invitations went out to the Deaf Association, Samaritans, Wesley Community Services, the Association of Non Government Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA), and the Downtown Community Ministry. Several of these groups already had previous involvement on the Executive Committee but had opted out over the last year or two. Later in the year Vincent de Paul Arts Group, the Community Law Centre, and Refugees & Migrants were added to the list. By the May meeting the Executive was able to welcome Anne Badir of the Wellington Multi Cultural Services Centre to its ranks as well as Bernadette Patelesio of Samaritans, Veronica Mak of the Wellington Association for Deaf Children and, in July, Tom White of Wesley Care. By the end of 2004 Glen McDonald of the Vincent de Paul Arts Centre too was welcomed onto the Executive Committee. Glen's commitment still saw her fulfilling a role as a valued Executive member some nine years later.

Open forums were stopped after a further presentation in March on primary health organisations (PHOs) from Lyn Irving and Hugh Norris of the Capital PHO. A request by the CPHO for Welcoss representation as part of the PHO's community caucus had to be declined given the current extensive workloads of Welcoss Executive Committee members. The inability of Welcoss to come up with a nominee for the CPHO's caucus was symptomatic of the huge pressure voluntary welfare organisations were under at the time. The Executive did agree, however, to try to have a forum or guest speaker at the AGM. In the event this was Stephanie McIntyre from the Downtown Community Ministry. In April, Welcoss also agreed to seek a renewal of its Ghuznee Street office lease for a further three years.

The 2004 AGM took time out in remembrance of the work with Welcoss of Norma Taylor who had recently passed away. Mrs Taylor had been a long serving and very hard working Executive Committee member who had taken on numerous roles and responsibilities on behalf of the organisation. Her standing was right up there with Wally Lake, Anne Town, Jenny Greenslade, David Robinson and other long serving and highly regarded Welcoss members. In an interview in 2000, recorded on tape by Maria Phelan, Mrs Taylor addressed a number of matters pertaining to the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC) and its successor the Wellington Social Services Council (WSSC). After attending her first WSSC meeting in March 1968, Mrs Taylor went on to assume a number of important roles including that of secretary for a good number of years.

In an earlier taped interview she recalled the WSSC's value in being able to bring together smaller groups to share efforts and resources in realising a number of key social sector related projects. The Senior Club and the Night Shelter being two. She also iterated the value of having central government departments and agencies participating in WSSC meetings and activities. The Wellington Hospital Board and the Social Welfare Department were two that Mrs Taylor remembered has having significant and valuable input. Others such as the Maori Affairs and Education Departments were more on the sidelines. Additionally she was able to note the trend from an organisation where cooperative support kept the wheels turning to when a paid secretary became essential and an annual income was required sufficient to meet rising operational costs. These included: room rents; and office and computer equipment. Previously one member organisation would have provided a photocopying service, another would supply a meeting room, another postage services and yet another secretarial support. On the tapes Mrs Taylor also recalled a growing proliferation of groups with increasingly narrower focuses. She said that health groups were one example where it was found that specialist organisations became more effective at dealing with increasing numbers of people with specific health issues. Mrs Taylor also clarified what Smith Family welfare support services entailed. In Welcoss' written records there is little which clears the fog relating to just what this group was. Mrs Taylor said that the Smith Family was a group of influential businessmen who raised funds through Trusts and private donations to support needy cases. One project supported by the Smith Family was to provide beachfront holidays in Napier for over worked and stressed Wellington mothers. The secretary-manager of the group was Miss Richards who was also secretary for the Mayoral Relief Fund while a very active WDWC and WSSC Executive Committee member.

By the end of 2004 the situation of a central location for Wellington's voluntary community organisations remained in abeyance. This some two years down the track when it first became an issue. The City Council, however, promised Welcoss that a policy for the city's community groups would be out for consultation early in 2005.

Key to early activity in 2005 was the March planning meeting. The planning day, with 15 members present, produced a draft formal plan. The planning process evolved over one day and focused on clarifying what the organisation's values and purpose entailed, what was working well and what was not, what changes might be made to improve outcomes, possible new activities and growth areas, what weaknesses were perceived, and who the key stakeholders were. The resulting draft plan agreed that the organisation's ongoing objectives were to: continue to produce issues of the newsletter; make submissions on new local and central government policies and proposed changes; initiate and support new projects; maintain and strengthen links with the social services sector; strengthen links with local and central government, official bodies, organisations, and departments; grow membership; and be an overall effective, accountable and financial viable organisation.

The planning meeting identified a number of changes in the social environment which could well affect future Welcoss activities. These included an aging population with one in five people expected to be over the age of 65 by the year 2020. A potential impact was seen as a likelihood of more people being unable to afford rest home care and having to be cared for in their own or their families' homes.

Another environmental issue was the matter of accommodation for community groups with some groups facing rent increases for the coming year of up to 6% and more. Good quality and affordable accommodation (and other facilities) for Wellington's elderly was an issue which Welcoss, in the guise of the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC), was involved in addressing from day one. It had continued to stretch the imagination and resources of energy through all its 60 years. As it still does. Welcoss' active involvement in promoting, and lobbying hard for, appropriate regulations and standards for rest homes in the 1950s, subsequent efforts to establish the Wellington Senior Club, and today's (2013) key roles in regional homeless and affordable housing strategies are all clear testament to Welcoss' activities on behalf of the elderly (and the homeless).

By 2006 Janette Ritchie was the Welcoss coordinator (the renamed Executive Officer position). Tasks involved producing the newsletter, undertaking grant applications, and maintaining financial records. As at the end of 2013 Janette was still producing the monthly newsletters while having relinquished her co-coordinator position only earlier that same year. By mid 2006 the coordinator was achieving up to 32 to 35 hours a week on behalf of Welcoss. Thus underpinning the increasing administrative workloads evolving from the organisation's activities. Two newcomers to the Executive Committee in 2006 were Judy McKibbin from Housing NZ and Adrienne Transom from the Problem Gambling Foundation. The attendance of a Housing NZ representative was welcome as the direct involvement of central government agencies had been a somewhat stop start affair for the past decade and a half at least. By 2006 the Executive comprised some 13 elected members. These represented Alzheimers Wellington (Gaynor Nairn who was also the Chairperson), the Eastern Suburbs CAB (Gael Bevan), the Johnsonville Community Centre (Jane Pike), the Wellington People's Centre (Jocelyn Frances O'Kane), Volunteer Wellington (Pauline Harper), Age Concern (Lys Noble), Wellington City Mission (Mary Moon), Strathmore Park Community Base (Lydia Handscombe), Wesley Care (Tom White), Housing NZ (Judy McKibbin), Vincent Arts Workshop (Glen McDonald), Suzanne Aubert Compassion Centre (Sister Margaret Murphy), Problem Gambling Foundation of NZ (Adrienne Transome).

Some effort was also out into getting youth representation but the response to a number of feelers put out was disappointing.

In February it was estimated that monthly running costs to the organisation were just over \$1,900. Some \$44,000 in total was deposited in either savings and cheque accounts or on term deposit. Total annual income at that time was some \$46,000 and annual expenditure was just over \$45,000. Additional funds were also applied for to upgrade a falling computer hard drive.

Since moving into the Ghuznee Street address Welcoss had been able to make use of the 7th floor meeting room for Welcoss meetings. With the new year hardly underway Welcoss was suddenly being faced with a \$50 cost to the Citizens Advice Bureau (within whose responsibility the meeting room fell) for each half day meeting. Historically all building users were to pay a portion for use of the room although there was nothing specific in the lease to that end. The Executive set out to try to negotiate a better deal than that offered. Finding an off site meeting venue was an alternative. This then became the only option when Welcoss was told in April that the building was being turned into apartments.

At the start of the year Welcoss had 101 paid up members with a potential further 79 groups and individuals who also received the newsletter. By May paid up members totalled 126.

CAMS reported in February that three year funding from the Wellington City Council looked likely which would start putting the organisation closer to a stand alone footing. In May Welcoss was introduced to the new City Council appointed City Communities Senior Adviser, Jenny Rains. It was the start of a close working relationship with that officer which was still ongoing as mid year 2013 loomed. 2006 also saw returns from 34 groups and two individual members to a survey seeking satisfaction indications with Welcoss and also highlighting individual needs such as shortages of volunteers, funding difficulties, accommodation problems, governance issues etc.

Pressure on the city's food banks had seen the Wellington City Mission forced to buy in food in order to maintain pace with a growing winter demand. Over much of the remaining time up to the 60th birthday celebrations, groups running food banks were to face increased demand and shortages of supplies. By 2011-2012 many new clients were previously middle income public servants and also students. The former were the victims of central government austerity measures in response to a global economic crisis after 2008. Students and other young school leavers finding it difficult to find work and/or facing big rent rises were also joining food bank queues. Even the advent of Kaibosh's mobile food collecting service struggled to keep food banks' stocks ahead of demand. By 2013 rising transport costs too were reducing numbers of regular clients' ability to get to food banks. But this did little to reduce the length of queues. From around 2008 petrol prices had steadily soared from just under 89 cents a litre to over \$2.00. After 1 July motorists again were looking at additional government levies on petrol. Thus stretching meagre budgets even more.

Chairperson Gaynor Nairn's annual report to the 2006 AGM in September reflected on the healthy relationship between Welcoss and City Council staff with whom Welcoss now worked closely. The shut down of the Betty Campbell Complex wic had been on the cards for a number of years was also referred to in her report. But she also confirmed to those attending that Welcoss had been working with the City Council to find suitable alternative accommodation for the complex's former users. But she warned this could yet take some time as the various issues were worked through. The AGM also approved a constitution change to allow for at least 10 but not more than 16 members being elected to the Executive Committee. Previously the figures had been between six and 12 members. A new quorum was set at seven. The Salvation Army's Oasis Centre had been added to the Executive's representation and by the end of the decade its face was, as at the end of 2013, Executive member Vicki Hirini.

CAMS' annual report for the year noted the completion of 33 mentoring agreements with clients over the previous 12 months. These had included a growing training role together with the ongoing development of resources. Attendees also heard that once CAMS was able to obtain some certainty around ongoing funding it would consider moving to a stand alone position. In the period following the AGM CAMS assumed responsibility for everyday funding and book keeping but would continue to provide its umbrella group with monthly financial reports.

A possible lease extension to Welcoss office space in Ghuznee Street up to 31 July 2007 emerged. But there was no right of renewal. Options to share space with NZCOSS or else going into Anvil House were then considered. The latter premises would be available in June 2007. In April Welcoss was presented with the opportunity of renting shared space with the YWCA on the third floor. But again a building sale and a change of landlord resulted in an opportunity to stay put. Albeit with a rent increase. Initial discussions revealed that this would equate to a little over \$1,1000 more per year inclusive of meeting room costs. Residents met and indicated a willingness to stay on if negotiations for cheaper rents would be possible. In the meantime tenants agreed to remain on a month by month rental basis pending a response from the landlord. Finally a three year contract was signed at a reduced rental but without access to the seventh floor meeting room. Monthly use of a meeting room on the 3rd floor was instead negotiated with the YWCA.

At this time too Welcoss was asked by the Wellington City Council for comment on its draft community group accommodation funding policy. The basis of the policy was to address the difficulties community groups were having in affording central city venues for their operations. The policy targeted groups that took a lead in providing coordination, support, and guidance for other organisations. And also to supporting emerging bodies. The policy restricted grant applications to groups or clusters of groups requiring accommodation for 30 or more hours each week. This was to encourage groups to work more closely together and share resources including accommodation.

As the year neared its end, the City Council's new policy draft at least held out some hope for community groups and Welcoss in the Ghuznee Street site. Over 2006 there had been a number of not well attended open forums including prisoner rehabilitation, the work of the Families Commission, primary health organisations (PHOs) again, problem gambling and the future of the Betty Campbell Centre. Accommodation for community groups, homelessness and problem gambling were a few of the topics that featured on mayoral meeting agendas over the year.

2007 started off with Welcoss approached to organise a meeting between the banking, electricity & gas, and insurance ombudsmen and the city's community groups. The focus would be on how the former groups services could benefit voluntary social service organisations. A March date for the meeting in the Loaves & Fishes Room on Molesworth Street was confirmed and advertised. In May CAMS got closer to signing a service contract with the Ministry of Social Development to develop a working book on how the model worked. The contract was finalised and handed on the following month. 2007 was also a year in which Welcoss became one of the first ever not for profit organisations to register with the Charities Commission. The AGM that year noted survey respondents indicated a lack of interest in wider public forum oriented gatherings and these were to be kept to a minimum in the future.

The CAMS annual report presented at the Welcoss AGM paid tribute to chartered accountant, Debbie Bax who left during the year after some three years as the CAMS mentor. She had been replaced by Denis Savin who in mid 2013 was still employed as CAMS' accounts mentor. CAMS also reported a surplus over expenditure of \$6,416.

The group acknowledged a \$25,000 grant from the Wellington City Council, the Ministry of Social Development contract, and grants from the Lottery Board (\$10,000), the Trust House Charitable Trust (\$5,000) the JR McKenzie Trust (\$3,000), and COGS (\$1,200) for their sound financial position going into 2008.

The Welcoss AGM of that year also recorded the name of Ros Rice representing NZCOSS attendance at Welcoss meetings. Some six years later Ros remained a regular attendee at monthly Welcoss meetings still representing the national body.

The year ended with news that all Wellington Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs) had merged but would remain represented on the Welcoss Executive Committee. Clare Teal became involved with the Welcoss Executive on behalf of the merged CABs. With Gaynor Nairn standing aside from the Chairperson's position from 2007-08, the succession went to Jocelyn Frances O'Kane. It was a role she kept up to the 2013 AGM. At the same time Jan Pike agreed to keep the Deputy Chair's workload on but subsequently stepped up to take the vacant Treasurer's position.

The two mayoral meetings over 2007 considered topics such as a housing stock upgrade (which the Council had agreed to undertake); housing for the elderly; planting and new lighting for the city environs; provision of recycling stations; emergency housing availability; and recapping of the Welcoss relationships with the Wellington City Council. This was spelled out as: being able to regularly meet with the Mayor, councillors and staff; working to resolve, if not eliminate, issues around homelessness within the city; City Council financial support for individual Welcoss affiliates and Welcoss itself; getting input from City Communities staff to Welcoss Executive meetings; assistance in helping voluntary organisations find office and meeting space; acceptance, and consideration, of submissions on annual City Council plans and local issues; and City Council subsidisation of special projects and provision of physical locations and sites; and maintaining the city's housing stock.

2008 began with the confirmation that Welcoss and CAMS were in the final phase of separation. Jan Pike who was to remain on the Welcoss Executive, was then thanked for the liaison work undertaken between the two groups. The start of the new financial year (1 July) was targeted as go it alone date. By then the CAMS Trust was set up and registered for GST and PAYE. Denis Savin also signed a new employment contract with the new Trust while all assets, undertakings, and liabilities were transferred. Also splitting up was the Ghuznee Group of building tenants as some groups moved out. One impact looming for Welcoss was likely to be increased photocopying and power costs. April 2008 recorded initial moves by Welcoss to develop a website. Setting up a sub-committee to oversee the project, a time frame, and contents and editing responsibilities were among the first stages of work on this.

A move to get Welcoss members to acknowledge their link to Welcoss at their own various community meetings and gatherings in addition to that of their own specific organisation was beginning to take root. This was giving Welcoss an increased public profile around the Wellington district. Less positive was the resignation of coordinator, Janette Ritchie who, however, was willing to retain the task of putting out each monthly newsletter for the following months. By June a new coordinator, Margaret O'Loughin, had been appointed and the Chairperson compensated for the extra coordinator work she had taken on in the mean time.

Piling up additional hours was to be an ongoing factor for the current Chairperson for the following five years as issues before Welcoss increased and the sector environment became more complex. As the Executive perceived continual excess in agreed paid work hours for the Chair an honorarium or additional payments for one off events was suggested. This was to be further looked at. But in October the new coordinator resigned citing the workload and the isolation involved. Debbie Delaney then started in the role on 25 November. Again, as at mid point in 2013 she remained in the position. A hint that Executive Committee meetings might have once been somewhat of a “bun fight” was revealed in an early report from the new coordinator who asked for greater meeting structures, for business sessions to keep to agendas, and the member feedback round scheduled as the last item. Her suggestion was to herald the structure which still largely operated by the 60th anniversary celebrations. The feedback session eventually evolved into a separate meeting. At this additional members outside the Executive were invited to attend and share a morning tea with the Executive prior to the feedback. Meetings must also have got rather loud at times too as the Executive had been asked to keep the meeting room door shut to reduce the level of sound.

The Chair's report to the AGM that year reported on submissions to the Select Committee on the Problem Gambling Amendment Bill. Concern was focused on poker machines and issues for vulnerable communities. From this evolved a special Welcoss project to pursue alternative funding sources other than from “pokie” machine allocations. Welcoss too considered joining and leading a campaign to ensure a “pokie free” Wellington. Over the months of considering participation in the project, Welcoss received endorsement from the Newtown Union Health Service. This was through many of that group's patients having gambling related issues. Using funds from a source of social disruption in the community was considered by many social service agencies acrimonious and in conflict with their principles. Out of the submission process also emerged a template for use for future Welcoss submissions on legislative changes. The Chair's report also highlighted the difficulty in achieving a balance between the time needed for governance and to discuss and strategise issues of broader social concern. On of these issues was consideration of greater cooperation among district COSSES in Kapiti, Porirua and the Hutt Valley.

The success of CAMS throughout the year was indicated through 55 mentoring agreements signed up to including mentoring community centres on behalf of the City Council.

The May and October meetings with the Mayor involved discussions over cheaper fees for elderly users of City Council swimming pools (the passport to leisure scheme), the need for a coordinator at the re-opened Seniors Centre, central government's inconsistent representation over city housing matters, creating partnerships between businesses and organisations in the the social services sector, a “men's shed” in the northern suburbs, community group accommodation in Community House.

Barnardos House was the location of the first Welcoss Executive meeting in 2009. An alternative meeting room had been found necessary once the YWCA meeting room in the Ghuznee Street address had proved unsuitable. A \$30 koha was suggested and agreed to for the tea and coffee provided by the Barnardos hosts. Capital Coast District Health Board (Maurice Priestly) and Super Grans (Lynne Scott) approached Welcoss seeking Executive membership.

In 2009 Super Grans was being re-set up in the capital after a stuttery start in 2003. The precarious reliance on funding grants for continued existence was underpinned with a significant funding cut announced for the Community Law Centre early in the year. Their crisis was eventually averted with a wider source of funding achieved.

Ollie Seumanufagai and Ann Dalziel joined the Executive from April representing the Salvation Army Hope Centre (as distinct from the Oasis Centre) and Age Concern respectively. As at September 2013 both remained Executive members. Ruth Collingham also gradually took over as the Volunteer Wellington representative with Welcoss and later assumed the deputy Chairperson's role. 2009 also saw a steering committee set up to review the Welcoss constitution with Charmaine Ross again re-appearing to assist. She had made contact some years before and was willing to become more closely involved with the constitutional review. This time she was part of the Executive team on behalf of WEAV (Wellington Ending Abuse & Violence). The development of the website again came up for discussion during the year with both Ruth Collingham, Debbie Delaney and Janette Ritchie (still working on the newsletter and eventually signing on again as a second coordinator) designated to progress a modern and effective facility.

Over the years Executive Committee meeting dates had varied in date, day and time. After a number of Thursday afternoon meetings, usually set for later each month, the Executive opted to for the mornings of the third Friday each month. Meeting venues had already moved again. This time to a Wellington City Council ground floor meeting room in the Council office complex. By June some 115 member subscriptions had been paid while the coordinators urged a search for additional new members be launched.

At the July meeting City Council Housing Officer, Perry Walker, set out the Council's proposed upgrade plan over the following two years for its housing complexes. The upgrade would start with the Te Ara Hou complex with an 18 month gradual upgrade of the Hansen Street complex in Newtown. All units would have thermal drapes installed. Solar heating would be included in low rise buildings and there would also be some double glazing. One block at Newtown Park would also be demolished. A tenant support advisor and a tenant liaison coordinator would be employed during the upgrade period to provide a contact point for concerned residents. They would also oversee needs assessments and transition issues.

In August the first of separate Welcoss Network meetings commenced. The 17 Welcoss members present gave a short update on their organisation's role and current activities. It was a format which continued through to, and on past, the 60th 2012 anniversary celebrations. In addition to Executive members present, presentations were given by representatives from Pregnancy Counselling (Wendy Nanai), Capital Primary Health Organisation (Rachel Harrison), Disability Equipment (Jo Maling), Health & Disability Services Complaints (Frances Mason), City Council-City Housing (Jeanette McCracken), and Ted Mills of the Wellington Housing Association of Tenants (WHAT). By 2012 Ted too had been elected to the Welcoss Executive.

In order to secure ongoing three year funding from the City Council, Welcoss was required to perform and undertake a formal "health check" to give the Council assurance that Welcoss was an efficient, effective and financially sound organisation.

One outcome of this process was Welcoss' elevation as the “go to” group for social concerns which the Council could, or would need to, address in the future. This meant a strengthening of strategic relationships between the two bodies in advocating, facilitating, and brokering community issues.

By the end of 2009 Welcoss was operating on an annual income stream of just under \$39,000 with expenditure sitting at around \$35,000. An operating surplus of \$3,972 had been achieved for the year. Assets at the end of the year totalled \$45,815 with total equity after assets of \$33,266. The financial outcomes were by then a long way ahead of what it cost to run the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC) and even the Wellington Social Services Council (WSSC) all those years ago. After the AGM of that year, Ruth Collingham (Volunteer Wellington) took the Deputy Chairperson's slot. The Executive also set up three sub groups to oversee financial policy, staff employment, and the newsletter. A communications sub group was to follow two years later joining an alternative funding subgroup. Kay-Maree Dunn (Te Whanganui a Tara Maori Committee) and Rosie Smith of Post Natal Distress (PND) indicated interest in joining the Executive.

The issue of the super city concept also raised its head at this time as the new Auckland model approached reality. Auckland voluntary sector groups feared they could be sidelined under the current wording of enabling legislation. From the National COSS Conference it became apparent to Welcoss attendees that not all COSS groups operated the same or even equally. Some had up to five paid staff running training programmes and providing specific social services within their spheres of influence. At least one was used as a funding distributor by its local authority. A significant Welcoss point of difference were the quarterly meetings with the Mayor. From the conference a set of common denominators to guide COSS activities included: providing written and oral submissions to select committees to influence legislation and raise public profiles; developing and maintaining a website; fostering relationships with funders throughout the year and not just when applications need to be made; collaborative purchasing eg computer equipment, printers, stationery and photocopiers etc; and wooing the media such as establishing a relationship with one or two journalists and/or inviting press coverage of meetings.

Mayoral meetings over the year covered the funding crisis with the Community Law Centre, social inclusion, three year funding processes, some local territorial authorities exiting from funding social services, increased usage of foodbanks but with decreased donations, community gardens, community care, and increased numbers of registrations with Volunteer Wellington from unemployed ranks.

Welcoss started 2010 with formal paid up membership of Volunteer Wellington in order to access their services. Mary O'Regan (Wellington Citizens Advice Bureau) was an additional attendee at the first Network meeting of the year. She was subsequently elected to the Executive and again is one of those who at the end of 2013 remained an active Committee member. By now the majority of the Executive comprised those who were to continue through to, and beyond, the 60th anniversary celebrations in September 2012.

In March a matter regarding the Capital Coast and District Health Board's discharge policy was presented to the meeting. There was concern that the policy was not working.

People were being discharged from hospital unsupported and in some instances were still bleeding. A letter to the Health Board expressing Welcoss concerns and seeking a response was agreed to once some case examples and anecdotal stories were gathered to support the letter. A copy of the discharge policy would also be sought. Further action was stilted when it was found that the discharge policy was secret. It was also there to cover hospital not patient needs. In addition stories of unacceptable discharges were not coming to light as hoped. By August the issue was left to a sub group to consider a further strategy.

The Chairperson's time on special projects was to be reimbursed at \$50 an hour. At the time this involved her working to align Welcoss with new financial reporting requirements. The need of an additional Wellington Women's Boarding House facility realised an approach to Housing NZ about renting premises to house up to six additional low income mature women living as an independent group on a permanent basis. As the residents would be particularly vulnerable, self management was not an option. As such the proposal would be serving a specific and valued need. Carol Ronayne representing the Boarding House was later elected to the Welcoss Executive. Responses from Housing NZ to the idea were not initially favourable. The department required the Boarding House to either negotiate a government contract, achieve an alignment to an umbrella organisation, or get accreditation to a similar group before it would assist.

The August meeting was the first for an additional administration volunteer who came to Welcoss via Volunteer Wellington. Duties and roles were to include minuting mayoral and Network meetings, finding stories for the newsletter and assisting in a one off membership information update. Just prior to the 60th anniversary celebrations the volunteer, who had a journalist and public relations management background, undertook the task of writing this history for the organisation's website. The August meeting was also attended by six Labour MPs who were on a fact finding mission to ascertain just what were the sector's main issues in the city. MPs were particularly interested in feedback that National Government funding cutbacks were starting to bite. This was particularly so for groups and programmes which had previously relied on between 44% and 90% government funding. Again the meeting day and date for the Executive and Network meetings was shifted. This time to the third Wednesday each month where they have remained.

2010 mayoral meeting topics included: City Councillors' new portfolios, impact of leaky homes costs to the Wellington City Council including impacts of funds available for other activities and projects, Ministry of Social Development's Wellington proposed Link office, the CAB's new website and logo, funding, future government and non government groups relationships, government contracting arrangements, the City Council's community action programme, Welcoss member survey results, the Wellington City Council's liquor ban proposal to extend to the whole of Wellington City, growing incidence of abuse of the elderly, and emergency preparedness of Wellington City in the event of a major disaster.

The City Council's concern with disaster readiness stemmed from the massive September earthquake which had struck an unprepared Christchurch. Little did the Council, or anyone else for that matter, realise that issues surrounding earthquake strikes were to be compounded just a few short months later in February when Christchurch was again hammered by a further and even more destructive shake.

121.

Abuse of the elderly was a relatively recent phenomenon which was to be reported on several times over the following two years by Age Concern's Ann Dalziel. General economic factors were forcing increases in the numbers of young adults staying at home or families moving back with elderly parents to reduce living costs. The resulting stress for all parties was apparently leading to physical, verbal and mental abuse.

The decade had proved a momentous one for the nation, for Wellington and for the local social sector. Political, economic and sporting events both overseas and in this country together with massive technological and social change had served to keep the social sector in Wellington and its Welcoss umbrella on its toes. While technological advances normally brought benefits one negative outcome was a manifestation of cyber bullying among school children at both primary and secondary school levels. In a few worst case scenarios suicides had resulted. By the end of 2013 schools were still pouring resources into dealing with its effects.

8

2011-2013

A slightly different approach in structure underpins the lead up to Welcoss' 60th anniversary celebrations and immediately post these. Much of the international and national scene setting frontispiece for the previous decade relate directly to the 2001-2012 and post period. So too does the dedicated Welcoss summary.

The real possibility of potential local government structural changes for the region and their impact for Welcoss has already been related to. Other references to 2011-013 in earlier pages included Welcoss involvement and developing relationships with the Wellington City Council which also apply to 2011-13. Particularly so in respect to active Welcoss participation in the City Council's social mapping project, and in developing viable homelessness and affordable housing strategies. Welcoss had been directly involved in many innovative solutions that were tried over its lifetime in respect to dealing with housing issues. Many succeeded. But the political, economic, social, and demographic factors which plied their trade over the decades have meant that numbers of people who needed shelter or access to affordable housing grew as did the complexity of their needs.

Housing related priorities for Welcoss also dominated much of the Welcoss Executive Committee's time over the 18 months leading up to its 60th year of existence. Albeit not exclusively or continuously so. At the end of 2011 Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, described the state of social housing in Wellington as fluid. What she went on to state in a newsletter editorial was that it probably could be better described as drying up. Hard words were directed at the perception that Housing NZ's priorities seeming to be to divest itself of stock and staff over providing housing for those who might actually need it. And even then only for as long as they need it. The responsibility for dealing with social problems arising out of housing needs appeared to be being transferred to the Ministry of Social Development. This was at the same time as Housing NZ continued to assume the narrower role of a property manager. In the Government's 2013 budget even this role was signalled to be relinquished to the private and social sectors to manage. Without the benefit of available small detail there appeared to be both benefits and dangers for house seekers in this approach. To the elderly, the homeless, the itinerants, and women escaping domestic violence were added desperate city bound job seekers, students, new unemployed and refugee families to those wanting good quality but affordable homes.

That housing is fundamental to life and wellness is a given. Overcrowded, damp and cold homes feeds ill health. In turn this places additional pressure on scarce health facilities. At the end of 2011 the Chairperson was looking for a new, bold, innovative broad based approach to solving Wellington's housing problems. She believed that past attempts had been too narrow and silo restricted.

123.

As well, when housing issues did get looked at the various players appeared to get rather "precious" and intransigent to new ideas.

Defending their patch appeared to be the unstated priority.

123.

2011 started off with approaches by Welcoss' coordinators to the new Director of Wellington ICT, Noel Mendoza, in order to strengthen the relationship between the two. Such was the success of the move that Noel became a regular attendee at Network meetings and in 2012 was elected to the Executive. Even more, Noel and his ICT team completed the development of the Welcoss website.

This was formally “unveiled” at the 60th anniversary celebration in 2012.

The need to extend its communication abilities had seen a sub group working on a communications policy for Welcoss over the previous months. A draft was ready in February 2011. But it took two further months to fine tune. For some years Welcoss had struggled to attract long term youth representation on the Executive. Youth oriented group, Te Roopu Awhina, had been part of the Executive Committee for a short time but resigned its representation at the April Executive meeting. This stimulated considerable discussion as to how to get youth groups more involved within the Welcoss umbrella. Evolve was one organisation that had been previously participated in Welcoss Executive matters. Albeit briefly. But it was suggested they be approached again along with perhaps community centre representation from one or other of these. In the end Daniel Friar from Evolve did attend the next meeting. At this he outlined Evolve activities in providing a hang out venue for youth together with counselling and accessing primary health care and social support services. Daniel was co-opted onto the Executive the following month. His time on the Executive was again not a long one. In 2012 Mark Wallis from Just Youth was elected to the Executive as a youth representative. But again his tenure was to prove a short one as he tendered his resignation to the 2013 AGM.

By now Welcoss was the only stable district COSS group in operation. Porirua COSS had failed for the third time the previous year and it was unlikely that renewed efforts to re-establish it would succeed. Some networking within Porirua's social sector did seem a possibility however. COSS activity in the Hutt Valley was subdued while the Wainuiomata COSS was a thing of the past. Carol Ronayne of the Wellington Womens Boarding House had shifted to Kaitkati during the year and resigned from the Executive. She was not replaced.

Mid year also saw general concern expressed about a government move to shift the Charities Commission under the wing of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). Concerns centred around proposed Crown control of a commission originally set up as independent.

In August Welcoss was faced with Housing NZ intentions to reduce its housing stock in any one area to 30%. This pushed the housing issue again up the priority list where it was to remain beyond 2012. At this time Welcoss' response was to seek a Housing NZ representative for the Welcoss Executive. Or at least get spokespeople from various organisations with housing interests to brief Welcoss more fully on the impacts and possible options for action. A subsequent meeting with the Mayor resulted in a Welcoss commitment to stay closely involved with Wellington's housing issues. During the year Welcoss received a one-off \$10,000 grant to cover costs of projects worked on by Welcoss over and above their voluntary contributions as committee members.

Anna Mathieson (Kaibosh) and Susan Blaikie (the newly appointed Wellington City Missioner) were co-opted onto the Executive following the AGM the previous month.

As outlined in the summary to Chapter 7 the story of Kaibosh's re-emergence in Wellington was a success story marked by innovation, determination and vigour. It was no surprise to many, therefore, when the group, whose forte was the collection of unwanted food stocks from supermarkets and other outlets for distribution to food banks earned it a national Green Ribbon environmental award and an expansion to Auckland. The purchase of a refrigerated truck to transport perishable goods was just one example of this organisation's ability to overcome obstacles to success. Another innovation to emerge over the year which delighted Welcoss members was the re-emergence of the Time Bank operating within the Newtown, Beramphore and Island Bay communities.

Instead of money the Time Bank dealt in people's time and skills to provide a helping hand to those in need. The concept was one first developed in the United States. Even before its launch at the end of October some 150 people had registered their interest to earn credits by hiring out their time and skills free of charge to others registered with the Bank. These would be then recorded (banked) and available for return for possible like favours in the future. Gardening, painting, lawn mowing, knitting, sewing, hedge and tree pruning, giving music lessons, computer and TV repairs, doing annual taxation returns, building repairs, window washing, companionship, home help etc were all possible sources of credit.

Not all was good news. The Somali Council lost its Health Board funding for infrastructure and social work as the Board looked to have to fund its deficit as its first priority. The Somali Council was focused on supporting Somali refugee families as they battled with local bureaucracies and other barriers in trying to integrate with their new country. Eventually their publicised plight led to funding from the private business sector. Central government cuts had not been restricted to just the health sector in order to ensure the sector remained within its financial means. Hundreds of public servants lost their jobs as the belt was tightened following the need for austerity measures after the financial recession hit in 2010.

The 2011 AGM accepted membership increases to \$40.25 (incl. GST) for organisations with income under \$50,000 annually and \$63.25 (incl. GST) for those above \$50,000 a year. Individual memberships were raised to \$20.00 and \$5.00 both inclusive of GST for waged and unwaged members respectively. For the previous seven years, organisational membership had been capped at \$25.00. Over that time Welcoss had subsidised the cost of printing and mailing the monthly newsletters. The true cost of producing and mailing these out per year was presently running at around \$60.00 per member organisation. The new membership rates meant that Welcoss would continue to subsidise a portion of these costs while introducing a scale of membership depending on the size of the organisation and also for waged and unwaged individual memberships. Subsequent to the 2013 AGM newsletter cost reductions were again raised at Executive Committee level.

In her 2011 annual report Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, described the year as one of consolidation rather than a momentous one. She said that it had been a year which allowed Welcoss to consolidate its systems and processes and in the way the organisation worked. Not all activity was consolidation focused, however.

At the October meeting Welcoss was invited by Wellington City Council officer, Jamie Dryberg, to take on the role as a leading community partner in a major project to map all Wellington City's social services. The project was promoted as being part of the wider community resilience building exercise. The aim of the new project was to obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of the funding and delivery of social support services throughout Wellington, identify gaps in the current funding and delivery of social services, and provide solutions to enhance their availability. In order to progress the project, the City Council was keen to develop specific partnership arrangements with key social service delivery groups and have Welcoss assume a leading role.

At the end of the proposal's presentation a five strong sub group of the Welcoss Executive met with Jamie to look further at how Welcoss could best assist. The mapping project then lined up with the Council's homeless strategy and affordable housing projects which were to occupy the group over the next 12 months and beyond.

Mayoral meeting topics over 2011 (this time with a newly elected Mayor, Celia Wade Brown), included: City Council planning for community resilience and development; a housing forum on a regional social housing strategy; foodbanks; issues arising under the Government's new Community Links regime involving second time applicants for special needs funding having to first go to budgetary advice services prior to further approvals which were reported even then as being over stretched; domestic violence awareness increases; abuse of the elderly; and emergency housing.

If consolidation was what underpinned much of Welcoss business over 2011. The 2012, anniversary year was described as challenging by the Chairperson (Jocelyn Frances O'Kane again) in February. First there were the Wellington City Council homelessness and affordable housing strategies together with the social services mapping project to progress. There was also the momentum for the 60th anniversary celebrations to keep on track. Concepts around social enterprise, a casino free Wellington, and supporting a national living wage movement were also matters which came before Welcoss early on in anniversary year.

The Welcoss Chairperson warned of the impact that a lack of jobs, the promise of more public service cuts, increased stigmatisation of beneficiaries, Work & Income's new system of service delivery, a reduction in central government commitment to social housing, and the placing of the Charities Commission within the umbrella of the Department of Internal affairs, to name but a few, would have on the social sector. Not to mention that these would be matters which would exercise Welcoss minds and energies over the coming months.

If the Chair's early outlook for 2012 was grim then NZCOSS Chief Executive, Ros Rice, sounded even stronger warnings. Hers was a call to arms to battle what she perceived were government led actions which would effectively undermine the country's claim to be a civilised society. She believed some changes to the way central government worked to deliver social services were in themselves a positive step. She went on to claim that these would be rendered impotent by the State ceasing to help those who could not help themselves. Ms Rice also warned of business interests targeting funding sources for themselves which in the past had tended to be the domain of community groups.

If that were not enough to stir the blood, Marion Blake of the mental health umbrella group, Platform, urged the Welcoss Network in March to consider more cross sector co-operation and sharing. This was to ensure not only the best possible outcomes for those with mental health issues but also in the areas of general health, housing, food and security. She advocated a fundamental change to the way the voluntary sector worked to meet the needs of all its clients than what had been done in the past.

In respect to some of the specific issues Welcoss itself was working in then promoting a casino free Wellington was right up there. The project was a specific Welcoss initiative which was taken to the mayor for support. Problem gambling related impacts were still disrupting families and causing angst and hardship. The prospect of the present moratorium against any additional casinos in the country being lifted was too bigger risk for Welcoss to ignore. Welcoss was keen to keep pushing the danger of an emerging casino proposal at the Council so everyone was prepared if (or when) ever such a proposal “came out of left field.” As it turned out concern about a behind the scenes push for a Wellington casino bore fruition in July 2013. Then it was revealed that one of SkyCity's conditions for building a new Auckland convention centre was a new casino for the capital. In the end that particular condition got no traction.

It was interesting to note a Dominion Post report of 9 July 2013 in which the newspaper reported that the Government's own officials had cautioned it to a possible increase in both problem gambling and money laundering when considering giving Sky City additional gambling concessions in return for a major contribution towards a new Auckland convention centre. The concessions included an extra 230 “pokie” machines and 40 gambling tables in its Sky City complex in exchange for a \$402 million new convention centre.

The advent of freer market economics within government policies from the Rogernomics years of the 1980s had seen a predominance of economic development and solutions over social concerns within various governments. Taking the risk of increased social problems arising from problem gambling against a new convention facility was a testament to that approach. Welcoss was well aware of more than just a few similar issues in Wellington without a casino arriving to further darken an already significant social problem in the city. The organisation adopted a close watching brief despite an existing Wellington City Council policy against supporting a casino in the city. The Welcoss Executive knew full well how much and how quickly the political environment can shift. Just as councillors can change at election time.

The national campaign for a living wage was one in which Welcoss was invited to take an active role. It declined to do so as a corporate body in the position of an activist. But it did support it in principle. Welcoss also encouraged individual member organisations to become active in the campaign should they wish. Campaign organisers defined a living wage as one in which the minimum wage was one that would provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life. It was also outlined as a wage which would enable workers and their families to live in dignity and participate actively in society. The idea had taken root in some overseas countries and particularly in Britain. London Lord Mayor, Boris Johnson, was a big fan and the Greater London Authority had paid its staff a living wage for 10 years.

Baltimore in the United States was the first city to adopt the concept. The U.S. city of Los Angeles too applied it widely. Research released in July 2013 showed that costs such as labour costs had not increased as much as sceptics had predicted. In Los Angeles, labour costs rose only (US)\$2.5 million a year against predictions of between \$30 million and \$40 million a year. Little wonder then that the Wellington City Council in 2013 also took its first steps towards its implementation. By mid 2013 a few private businesses too had adopted the Living Wage concept as its momentum gathered pace across the country. The initial basis for the campaign was a 23rd out of 30 ranking for New Zealand by the OECD for income inequality in developed countries with up to 200,000 children likely to be already living in poverty. By the next year even the Government acknowledged the plight of large numbers of families in New Zealand by agreeing to look at a food in schools programme. This followed ongoing reports of children arriving at school with no breakfast prior to leaving home and no lunch.

Varying solutions had been proposed over the years for voluntary community groups to access funding. Or manage better in a toughening operating environment. By no means the latest was something called “social enterprise.” The concept was promoted by the Government. But it was not something that was entirely new. It had been tried in the past but had been found somewhat wanting. Successful attempts were overseas based and were those supported by their Government such as Social Traders in Victoria, Australia.

Social enterprise is a concept based on trading with a social purpose rather than financial profit in mind and was outlined to Welcoss by Work & Age Executive colleague, Roger Tweedy. He suggested that three areas in which social enterprise might work were in: the development of new service delivery models; working to build viable communities within a market economy; and including disadvantaged people in the real economy. Roger's view was that many of the social service agencies of the day were not operating in this space. They were not geared to running an enterprise. He explained at that time that he was working with colleagues in Auckland and Christchurch to create a national network to support agencies wanting transition to the concept.

Other social trends brought yet newer issues to the Executive or Network tables over 2012. These included rising jobless figures, and consequently food bank queues, added to by university graduates unable to find work. This was a relatively new trend in this country; Other trends reported were Citizens Advice Bureau staff having to deal with increasingly lengthy, complex and stressful enquiries; and elderly people with mental health problems falling between the cracks in terms of being able to access vital care. Just as the final paragraphs of this history were being drafted, newspaper and television news accounts over the week of 29 July to 2 August 2013 exposed concerns with the standard of rest home care in some private run facilities for the elderly. The private rest home care industry surged in this country from around the 1990s. Most of the 2013 issues seemed to focus on the lower than preferred ratio of trained medical staff and care givers to residents; and the lack of adequate training given to care givers. The matter brings to mind some of the work of the Wellington District Welfare Committee which lobbied hard in the 1950s and 60s to ensure sufficient, affordable and quality standards of elderly care. It is to be hoped their efforts are not to be in vain.

Mayoral meetings over the year covered, among other matters: a new community directory; progress on the the social mapping project; social enterprises; a new Time Bank for the Southern Suburbs; continued pressure on foodbanks with families under stress; the wind up of the Wellington People's Centre with its functions being split between Aspire (benefits) and the Citizens Advice Bureau (workers rights); a casino free Wellington; community gardens and orchards, and earthquake strengthening of Anvil and Community House complexes,.

The year forecast by the Welcoss Chair, NZCOSS, and other Network members may not have painted a pretty picture. Nevertheless it proceeded under good management by a Committee whose core membership had been stable for a number of years already. The 2012 anniversary year Executive Committee comprised: Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane (Well Health); Deputy Chairperson, Charmaine Ross (Te Whare Rokiroki Maori Women's Refuge); Vicki Hirini (Salvation Army Oasis Centre for Problem Gambling); Ann Dalziel (Age Concern); Jan Pike (CAMS & Johnsonville Community Trust); Glen McDonald (Vincent's Art Workshop); Jude West (Problem Gambling Foundation);* Ollie Seumanufagai (Salvation Army Hope Centre); Mary O'Regan (Citizens Advice Bureau); Noel Mendoza (Wellington ICT); Roger Tweedy (Work & Age); Ted Mills (Wellington Housing Association of Tenants); Shane Lau (Multicultural Services); Mark Wallis (Just Youth); and Mervin Ransom (Literacy Aotearoa).

Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, Mary O'Regan, Ann Dalziel, Vicki Hirini, Roger Tweedy, Jan Pike, Glen McDonald and Charmaine Ross had been associated with Welcoss in one capacity or the other for some considerable time by now. Welcoss was also well served by two paid part time coordinators in Janette Ritchie** and Debbie Delaney. Again both had been on the ball in administering to Welcoss' governance and communications needs already for several years.

Overriding everything for much of the year were the ever faster approaching 60th anniversary celebrations. These were held in August in one of the City Council's upstairs chambers following the AGM. The Mayor launched proceedings and later there was the formal cutting of a special cake with current and former Executive Committee members on hand to participate. These included one or two surviving life members who were made especially welcome.

And so the 60 years milestone was reached and suitably commemorated. But Father Time keeps on moving and work goes on. There is much for Welcoss to do and there are some clouds on the not too distant horizon. Just what the future may hold is outlined further in the next and concluding chapter.

* After being re-elected at the 2012 AGM, Jude West resigned in 2013.

** Janette Ritchie too resigned her coordinator's role early in 2013 but continued to produce the monthly Welcoss newsletter.

9

Conclusion

The End of the Beginning, So Where To From Here

Where to from here? What unfolds over the next 40 years until Welcoss or whatever name it may operate under meets to commemorate 75 and then possibly 100 years will make interesting reading. Indeed there are sufficient clouds on the horizon to feed speculation as to whether there will be a Wellington City based social services umbrella organisation at all. At least in the form it has taken in the past

Passages in the Preface and in the previous two chapters considered potential impacts of possible local authority structural changes for the whole of the Wellington region, Welcoss included. At the time of writing large scale amalgamation was being proposed. The future of a Welcoss type of umbrella group may well be uncertain if such an amalgamation occurs. There are both opportunities and threats in such an amalgamation. It is quite feasible that a Welcoss type organisation will flourish and even expand to be a regional based entity serving the interests of the region as a whole. On the other hand there may be no room at all for Welcoss under a new local authority structure. There will still be social service needs to be met by the various voluntary agencies presently operating in the city and its environs. But at the moment Welcoss is very much dependent on Wellington City Council support and funding to carry out its functions. Any future under a new local government structure would depend on just how it sees how to best relate to voluntary service agencies. Even if Welcoss were to continue there would likely be changes. Already the calls on Welcoss personnel to participate in and even lead key city social service related projects are increasing. That Welcoss is thought highly enough of to make those calls is gratifying. But its present membership is stretched to fulfill their own organisations' requirements. Where then will Welcoss get the time and expertise on the ground to meet any expanding role. Lengthening queues at the region's food banks, soup kitchens and night shelters; rising youth unemployment levels; and issues surrounding homelessness and mental health certainly seem to point to an ongoing needs for funded social service support umbrella groups like Welcoss. If not, how do we maintain a decent and civilised society? If at all.

As referred to in the previous chapter, one pointer to the future was provided by Platform CEO, Marion Blake in March 2012. At the time she outlined a need for wider social service sector involvement and discussions on achieving the best possible mental health solutions in the area. She said that various health and community sector agencies worked in silos. Yet mental health issues often stemmed from unemployment, low quality housing, lack of food, and physical health problems. The impact of working in silos minimises positive impacts for those with mental health afflictions. As well some 84% of mental health funding was presently channeled into institutional care facilities. Yet the majority of people needing mental health related support remained in the community using community support and having to cope with a prejudiced environment.

Ms Blake advocated a need to change in approach in providing for the needs of those suffering mental health afflictions away from the current silo approach and getting cross sector conversations going and a more effective sharing of resources in order to achieve better social services across the board. It may be the path to dealing with the area's future social problems. Though past history would appear to limit such hopes.

On occasion over Welcoss' previous 60 years there had been calls for sharing of expertise, information and even resources to achieve better social service outcomes. Responses tended to be muted. Individual organisations were reticent. This was particularly noticeable when the matter of sharing resources, and especially funding resources, was raised. Something not illogical in times of tight competition for funds and other resources. Nevertheless Ms Blake has lit the candle under a possible alternative approach to working towards working with those in need in the wider community. This one stop shop, cooperative, integrated approach to social support provision was tried through the 1990s and for much of the previous decade through the Wellington People's Centre. It operated without silos for a time under one roof providing medical, dental and worker rights oriented advisory services. With structural changes to primary health provision the model came under stress and folded in 2012. It was a model that required firm, committed, and skilled leadership to work. The People's Centre eventually failed. But it was a model that 2007- 013 Welcoss Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, said might still work well at some future time.

As for the Welcoss Executive, 2012-13 Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane is aware of a need for the group to widen its funding base given the potential for huge change within local government structures and priority setting across the whole country. It becomes apparent, therefore, that while recent and past successes of Welcoss and its sister organisations have been built on mutually strong and supportive relationships with their various local authorities, it would be unwise to assume a status quo situation continuing. Anticipating and planning for change might pay the best dividend.

There was some hint of this during a Welcoss Planning Day in May 2013. There it was agreed that the focus should be long term. It should involve future proofing Welcoss and not confine it by the past. Those present acknowledged that the organisation must always be open to new ideas and new ways of working. One of the members there was keen to see Welcoss rebranded possibly along the lines of Rotorua COSS. That group recently rebranded itself as Community Rotorua in order to obtain a wider community mandate. And to also include environmental issues and the newer breed of community groups growing up across that city. Similar community based approaches have been adopted in the Waikato and Waikare. In some instances for these new structures holding and distributing local authority funding is involved. Whether or not a rebranded Welcoss would feel comfortable with such responsibilities lies in the future. And again it would depend on the perceptions of its local government mentor at the time. But a Welcoss rebranding was also seen as one way of perhaps tapping into more younger people who often made up the types of groups being targeted in Rotorua. A dedicated working party or project team was suggested as one way to pursue the rebranding concept in greater detail and in consultation with the wider Welcoss membership, the Wellington City Council, and the "wider community" over the next year.

The vision proposed at the planning day would see a more valued strategic partnership with the Wellington City Council (or any alternate emergent regional body) similar to organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce & Sport Wellington. It was said that while Welcoss had a good relationship with the Community Services section of the WCC it was not fully visible. Nor was Welcoss included always in the WCC's discussions on the city's community services at a strategic level. Being more of a community voice was seen as a much needed future role for Welcoss.

Also with the potential for structural changes looming it was stated at the planning day that Welcoss needed better regional coverage. Whatever direction taken by Welcoss it was agreed that standing still was definitely not an option. It was also agreed that with a trend for City Council to be presently moving out of community development activity, Welcoss was being provided with both an incentive and an imperative to assume a wider community development role. Some of the ideas put up at the planning day for later full Executive consideration to potentially reshape Welcoss' future for further consideration included:

1. While Welcoss was well known and highly regarded in the social services sector it needed a broader focus
2. Planners and decision makers in WELCOSS needed to be more inclusive with new groups represented and more young members to ensure new ideas and future proofing the organisation
3. Welcoss needed to be the eyes, ears and voice of the community by being aware of issues across a broad spectrum.
4. The 'social services' part of the Welcoss name was restrictive and slightly 'old fashioned'.
5. The areas covered by Ottawa Charter for health services were the areas which should be encompassed by Welcoss ie:
 - peace,
 - shelter,
 - education,
 - food,
 - income,
 - a stable eco-system,
 - sustainable resources,
 - social justice, and equity.
6. Any broadening of focus could be attractive to groups currently not involved in Welcoss activities. Often these tended to be groups in which young people are involved.
7. A 'rebranding'/refocusing exercise could help to broaden Welcoss' focus and send a message to the wider community that this was happening and thus help create a wider public profile.
8. Ideally all new community groups would become members. As such Welcoss should aim for a level of credibility which resulted in contracts from Council and other groups including corporates.

Other practical ideas for consideration included: having longer Executive meetings every two months instead of every month; taking more time to discuss substantive issues if the constitution allowed; longer network meetings every two months with more time for groups to discuss issues and possibly discover areas for collaboration; wider community planning days with Executive members to personally approach and invite community groups to participate; a notice board at network meetings to encourage a learning exchange environment; a message board on the website; providing access to services e.g the organisation's supervision data base could be a model for other services on the website; sharing policies and procedures among community groups to reduce and even avoid wheel reinvention; sharing submissions; ensuring all Executive members see submissions before they were circulated; employing someone to undertake a membership/fundraising drive; making greater use of Volunteer Wellington for publicity and promotion; taking a larger presence at ANGOA (Association of Non Government Organisations of Aotearoa); having more clarity about the different roles of WELCOSS, ANGOA, NZCOSS and other social development partners; exploring the potential role of social media; and re-instigating special issue project teams.

Welcoss first as the Wellington District Welfare Committee (WDWC) and then the Wellington Council of Social Services (WCSS) had been through similar exercises before over its history. Sometimes these reviews were stimulated as a result of lessening interest among the membership. Sometimes they were generated through a changing sector environment or from a need to confront new issues. At other times threats building on the horizon had to be countered by looking anew at the best structure and means to do so. At this moment in Welcoss' history a review to future proof itself is underpinned by a mix of all the above conditions. At this point in time just what the Welcoss Executive finally determines from its current review and the success or otherwise of its implementation is unknown. A following Executive meeting also agreed to also include input from its wider Network members at an expanded monthly forum.

Also yet unknown is the structure of its future local authority partner and the potential impact on Welcoss' future.

The 60 year story of Welcoss (and its two forerunners, the WDWC and WSSC) to now has been something of a metamorphosis. It is a process that continues. In the 1950s we saw the initial and tentative explorations of a new body coming to grips with the environment it had been born into. As the years passed the organisation quickly grew more sure of itself. It became stronger and reached out to make its presence felt. By 2012 it may not yet had metamorphosed into the beautiful butterfly that it could yet become. That would imply the attainment of a pinnacle which I believe has yet to be reached. However, Welcoss' wings are still in motion and it is flying. The writer of Welcoss's next 40 years history will be able to enlighten readers as to where its journey took it in the years immediately after 2012. The next chapter in the Welcoss story should make fascinating reading.

For myself, I feel privileged to have met, through the Welcoss archives, many, many dedicated people who have been aligned with the organisation during its metamorphosis between 1952 and 2012. Those 60 years involved years of struggle and frustration. There were years of growth and years of decline. On at least two occasions the organisation considered winding up. But there were also many major successes and triumphs.

133.

These were often only able to be achieved through the energy, commitment and pure stubbornness of Welcoss members to ensure that people who needed support got it. Without that energy, commitment and stubbornness a decent and civilised society to which most New Zealanders aspire may have remained only a pipe dream. And while not yet attained, a civilised society may still prove within our reach. I hope so. I also hope the writer of the next chapter in the Welcoss story gets as much from his, or her, journey as I have had writing this. It has truly been a labour of love.

Harry Gibbons
July 2013

About The Writer

Harry Gibbons (BA Soc Sciences, and Dip. Bus. Studies, Massey University); and (Dip. Corp. Mgt, University of Asia & the Pacific) was born in Hastings. He was educated at Paeroa College and Dannevirke High School. After leaving school he trained as a primary school teacher at Ardmore Teachers College and taught in various primary schools between 1962-76. In August 1976 he turned to journalism and for the next six years worked on the Dannevirke Evening News and was additionally a radio news “stringer” for Manawatu and Hawkes Bay radio stations.

Between mid 1981 and the end of 1987 Harry worked in Parliament as a press secretary with Ministers of the Crown in both the Muldoon and Lange Governments. His tenure in Parliament included working, at different times, with the Ministers of Justice & Attorney General, the Hon Jim McLay; The Minister of Employment, Immigration and Regional Development, the Hon Sir Kerry Burke; and the Minister of Works, the Rt. Hon Fraser Coleman.

Subsequently Harry worked in external relations and communications management roles with the Audit Office, Transit New Zealand and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). Later when still with ACC Harry was employed within the Corporation's strategic planning and business excellence units. Over his last seven years of his employment Harry was ACC's Corporation's company secretary for both its staff superannuation scheme and its private sector injury management subsidiary, Catalyst Injury Management Services.

Harry retired from the paid workforce at the end of 2007.

Between 1977 and 1984 Harry completed first an extra mural BA social sciences degree and then a diploma of business studies with Massey University. In 1993 he completed a second extra mural diploma. This being a diploma in corporate management with the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Harry is a keen reader (especially history, detective stories and political thrillers) while his music and acting interests have involved a number of leading and supporting roles in various musical and drama stage productions. His last stage appearance was in Stagecraft's 2013 Wellington production of Ian Cross' “The God Boy.” He is also a keen follower of cricket having played, umpired and administered the game at club and minor representative level for over 50 years (sometimes all three at once).

Harry has previously written a largely subjective history of the Karori Cricket Club's first 25 years of its second century. That history, titled “*Fighting the Good Fight*” now features on the club's website. He has also written a number of travel articles including features on travelling through the Baltic countries, the Pere La Chaise Cemetery in Paris and getting the best from your accommodation dollar in New York. He is currently in his fifth year learning Italian.

Harry lives with his wife, Jane, in their Karori home in Wellington. The couple have two adult children. Alastair and Erica who both grew up in Wellington. Alastair lives and works in Wellington in the telecommunications industry and daughter Erica currently lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

APPENDICES

| | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Chairpersons & Life Members | 1 |
| 2. Interview with Anne Town | 3 |
| 3. Interview with Jenny Greenslade | 5 |
| 4. Interview with David Robinson | 7 |
| 5. Interview with Jocelyn Frances-O'Kane | 10 |

**APPENDIX 1:
WELLINGTON DISTRICT WELFARE COMMITTEE & WELCOSS CHAIRS &
LIFE MEMBERS 1952-2012**

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1952-58 | Mr H.S. (Syd) Cross | Presbyterian Social Services Association |
| 1958-66 | Mrs H. D. Muir | Mayoral Metropolitan Relief Fund |
| 1966-68 | Mr Clark | Presbyterian Social Services Association |
| 1968-76 | Mrs Tiller | Mothers' Helpers Association |
| 1977-79 | Mr David Nicholson | |
| 1979-82 | Father Brian Sherry | Catholic Social Services |
| 1982-83 | Ann Shaw | FVWO |
| 1983-84 | Ms Sue Driver | Wellington City Council |
| 1984-85 | Mr Selwyn Boorman | NZ Prisoners Aid Association |
| 1985-86 | Mr David Robinson | Wellington City Community Child Care Assn. |
| 1986-87 | Ms Viv Hamilton | Community Work Training Project |
| 1987-88 | Ms Sue Driver Ms Karen Ward | Wellington City Council PSS |
| 1988-89 | Ms Lois Duurloo Mr Mark Pearson | Banardos Friendship Centre (Baptist Church) |
| 1989-1990 | Ms Aileen Buchanan | Girls Friendly Society |
| 1990-91 | Mr Mark Pearson | Friendship Centre (Baptist Church) |
| 1991-96 | Mrs Anne Town | New Horizons Trust for Women |
| 1996-98 | Mrs Jenny Greenslade | Epilepsy Association |
| 1998-99 | Mr John Consedine | Wellington Hospital |
| 1999-2002 | Mr Kevin Hackwell | Downtown Community Ministry |
| 2002-03 | Mr William Holden | Wellington Housing Trust |
| 2003-08 | Ms Gaynor Nairn | Alzheimers Society |
| 2007- | Jocelyn Frances O'Kane | WellHealth |

B) LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs Norma Taylor

Deaf Welfare Services

Mrs Anne Town

Play Centre & New Horizon's Trust for Women

Mrs Jenny Greenslade

Epilepsy Association

Ms Gaynor Nairn

Alzheimers Society

APPENDIX 2:

2012 INTERVIEW WITH WELCOSS LIFE MEMBER, MRS ANNE TOWN

Issues which challenge today's Welcoss Executive and membership remain largely those which former well respected Welcoss Chair and current life member, Anne Town cbe, was also faced during her time with the organisation. This included included two years in the role of Chair between 1992-94 prior to a well earned life membership award.

Anne Town is one of a number of former chairs and life members who remain alert to and very interested in the the work of the Wellington City Council's funded community social service support umbrella group which in September celebrated its 60th birthday.

Anne is one who follows closely the activities of her former organisation keeing in touch through its newsletters and personal contacts within the present executive. As well, her reminiscences of her Welcoss involvement during the late 1980s through to the mid 1990s are backed by a stack of well ordered documents and reports from those days hinting at a very well prepared and efficient time in the chair's role. This stems partly from a mix of earned and natural leadership and partly from a need to manage a huge community volunteer workload.

Anne Town came to Welcoss from an extensive involvement in the Playcentre movement. It was one of her first forays into developing strong leadership skills after arriving in Wellington from Britain in 1952 with her husband. She honed these skills and was to later apply them across a raft of community related responsibilities. In addition to Welcoss, these included terms on the former Wellington Hospital Board, the Wellington South Health Committee, NZ Council of Social Services and the Well Link Housing Trust. All represent just some of her community related activities.

She recalls some fiery meetings with local communities during her work with Well Link which had been established to find housing for former patients of Porirua Hospital. Like the issue of new prisons people thought the housing projects a great idea as long as they were not next door to them. Hence the hostile fire experienced.

It was as a Play Centre representative that Ms Town attended her first Welcoss AGM in 1987. There she saw at first hand what that organisation was involved in and received a handle on just what were the issues it dealt with. She also liked the venue at a house used as the headquarters of the NZ Institute of the Blind which was such a beautiful venue in a beautiful location. Later in her time on the executive and as Chair, Welcoss worked from offices in the Betty Campbell Complex on the top level of the James Smith's car parking building.

At the time office space was shared among a number of other community social service organisations which certainly facilitated networking and keeping abreast of a range of the various social issues in the city environs.

In her time as chair Anne Town identified issues around poverty, homelessness, funding, housing, violence against women, youth issues and health including mental health as key ones in and around Wellington City.

4.

Sadly she sees them still looming just as large today. Not that she hasn't seen progress. She has. It's just that these issues are so huge and have placed a huge strain on social service work in the region from long before her own involvement in Welcoss.

"Sometimes it was like bashing our heads against a brick wall to gain some progress and higher level support, she said. "Housing issues always seemed to provide a barrier to getting on," Mrs Town said.

But there were some successes. It was in her own years with Welcoss which saw the Womens' Boarding House and the Community Accounting Mentoring Service (CAMs) both of which for a time Welcoss administered directly. Then the executive met monthly as today. But there was no Network of the broader membership meetings which these days follow each Executive Committee meeting.

In the late 1980s and through to her relinquishing the chair Welcoss ran up to 8-10 additional forums and workshops per annum. "Expert" speakers were called upon to address groups which included attendances from a wider spectrum of the community than those involved in social support work. The press also often attended making up numbers in excess of 40 at times.

Mrs Town recalls topics around youth affairs, the forthcoming Privacy Act and a seminar conducted by the Employment Task Force as issues drawing particular interest.

Workshops often focused on small group money management particularly during the life time of the Community Organisation Grants Scheme, or COGS, in which Welcoss had an active support role. "Often COGS recipients had little or even no background in coping with the accountability required and management of the funds they received," Anne Town said.

Just as today, Welcoss met with Wellington's Mayor four times a year. But she did say Welcoss had to continue to push for these. This was some what surprising as Mrs Town said that the Mayor of the day, Mark Blumsky, had a particular affinity with the plight of the city's needy and gave the organisation full support.

Today Anne Town is grateful for Wellington City Council support prior to her own time in the chair, during it when it became an incorporated society and since. Welcoss could not have done the good it did without it she claims. She also claims that it was really the support of hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of other volunteer workers who were really behind her cbe award in the mid 1990s. It was really their's she says, "I was just their representative recipient and holder," she said.

At 82 years of age, she still thinks that Welcoss remains a marvellous organisation. It was then and is now too she maintains. And she is quite sure it will still be a marvellous organisation in 60 years time. But just now she is looking very much to celebrating Welcoss' first 60 years in September and catching up with former colleagues, volunteer supporters and WCC councillors and staff.

APPENDIX 3:

INTERVIEW WITH WELCOSS LIFE MEMBER, MRS JENNY GREENSLADE

A desperate need to network with other community based social support organisations was the catalyst for Jenny Greenslade's initial involvement with Welcoss in the late 1980s.

As the new Field officer of Epilepsy Wellington, Jenny was keen to make contact with similar groups and to find what the issues were that they faced which might be similar to her own while also seeking shared solutions to shared problems.

It is now history that, like Anne Town, Jenny remained with Welcoss and went on to become the organisation's Chair/President and later a life member. Indeed her involvement with and commitment to Welcoss and its work carried on after her presidency right through until her retirement from her post with Epilepsy Wellington.

When asked if her early involvement with Welcoss gave her what she was seeking as Epilepsy Wellington's new Field Officer the answer was a very definite, "Yes." She became quickly convinced of its relevance and usefulness and remains fully supportive of its aims and work.

Again, like Anne, whose time in Welcoss she also overlapped with, she noted that the really big social issues for Wellington during her involvement remain largely the same today. That is poverty, housing (always a major issue of concern in the late 1980s and through the 1990s), health, funding and financial management.

Jenny too recalled the value of the regular forums organised by Welcoss not only for Welcoss members but also other groups and organisations. She recalled that the need to work with the media and to also promote their work across the Wellington region resulted in sessions devoted to media training and communications, particularly in writing and producing newsletters. She said that communication skills were particularly needed given that the majority of community service organisations were staffed wholly by volunteers and not paid specialists in media, administration or even financial management skills. All these matters were subjects of various forums over Jenny's years of Welcoss involvement. The last named loomed particularly important as various trusts and government funders sought more and more financial transparency and accountability in dealing with applications for grants.

Later as community service organisations grew in size to manage their growing needs and increased client numbers worker supervision skills became a priority need as the numbers of volunteer workforces of these groups also increased.

Jenny recalled that ongoing legislative changes, particularly in the health and welfare fields, were a continuing headache for Welcoss and the organisations it represented. Often these changes involved new structures to deliver health services, new bureaucracies to oversee and manage them and new rules governing access to services. As a result Welcoss was constantly dealing with complaints about access to services and organising additional forums of discussions with central and local government officials to clarify issues and the impacts of new changes.

6.

Jenny remembered lots of work shops on bi-culturalism in the late 1980s and through 1990s. She said that this was a particular major issue and which was the subject of lots of workshops as Welcoss member fronted up to encompassing the nation wide resurgence of Maori culturalism and language.

Yet other workshops dealt with getting adequate training for volunteer workers. With Welcoss pushing hard, Wellington City Council support became central to ensuring the availability of this training. At least until it was taken over by Volunteer Wellington.

One aspect of Welcoss business that has passed on is that during both national and local central election lead ups in the 1980s and 1990s it was not unusual for political speakers from various parties and factions to speak at Welcoss gatherings. However, the Welcoss Executive was very much at pains to ensure even handedness and that all parties and factions were invited. These days political parties do attend wider Welcoss Network meetings if they request to do so. As such all political parties are notified of Welcoss' willingness to accept their attendance if they should wish.

During the 1980s and 1990s political attendances tended to revolve around local single issue topics such as motorway extensions and on one occasion refugee resettlement. In depth explanations from politicians and often attending officials on these issues clarified concerns not always covered by the mass media. As such they were usually very much appreciated. Jenny too said that often the visitors had to deal with some pretty searching and even hard hitting questions from the floor.

Jenny was surprised at the relative demise of the Hutt and Porirua Cosses which, in her day, were strong, vigorous and well supported.

Like Anne Town Jenny had nothing but praise for the support and work two of Welcoss' two paid co-ordinators. In Jenny's period at the helm these were Janet Weir and Maria Phelan who both did a fabulous job both as the front face of Welcoss and for their skills behind the scenes as well and who were a wonderful asset.

APPENDIX 4:

INTERVIEW WITH FORMER WELCOSS CHAIRMAN (1985-86) & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, DAVID ROBINSON

Former Wellington Social Services (WSSC and later Welcoss) Chairman and active member for some 30 years, David Robinson, first came into contact with the group in 1972. This was when he joined the ranks of Wellington City Council's (WCC's) salaried staff as the new Community Services Officer.

Wellington Social Service Council (WSSC) records at the time initially saw the City Council's new appointee as something of a threat. There was a belief among some members within the WSSC that the new Community Services Officer would in fact assume its role. Additionally the City Council oversaw the activities of a Community Services Advisory Group. As a result of both these City initiatives there was some support among WSSC members for winding up the organisation. But wiser counsel advised a wait and see approach and it was this view which prevailed in the end.

Early contact between David and WSSC Executive members soon established that the roles of both could be mutually supporting. So it proved. It was not too long before the new Community Development Officer became a regular attendee of full WSSC meetings on behalf of the WCC, then at the monthly Executive meetings and finally as a fully elected WSSC Executive member. Then in 1985-86 David, who by then was representing the Wellington Community Child Care Association, was elected to Chair the WSSC Executive. It was a position he retained for only a year. But he remained a vigorously active feature of WSSC activities over the following 15 years. If not representing the Community Child Care Association then it was an ad hoc mental health services group. In his earlier years with the WSSC he recalls organisations such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), Community Law, Women's Refuge and Rape Crisis among other new groups forming branches in the city and eventually aligning themselves with the WSSC to reflect additional emerging social issues needing attention.

David still keeps in touch with today's Welcoss activities and even attended two meetings in 2012.

While maybe no longer an active participant in Welcoss work, David remains involved in the social policy field. He has become a leading light in the Institute of Policy Studies being the author and co-author of a number of well read documents. These include *"Social Capital & Policy Development," "Social Capital in Action,"* and *"Building Social Capital"* among others. David also has an active role in ANGOA (Association of Non Government Organisations in Aotearoa) and is its Pacific Programme Manager for the International Centre for Not-for-Profit-Law. It was largely his growing involvement in international issues and roles with the New Zealand Planning Council, the newly established New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS) and later the Institute of Policy Studies which saw him reduce his involvement with Welcoss. This was around 1993. He said it was not so much a matter of a specific retirement or resignation date but one of just drifting on to other things over time. Even so, in 1996 David was still listed as a Welcoss Executive member representing the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS). A perusal through Welcoss records over the 1970s, 80s and 90s reveals just what a huge workload David undertook over those decades.

8.

As well as his salaried work with the City Council David headed, or was involved in, a number of WSSC working sub-committees including leadership roles in some.

Over the latter 1970s and through the 1980s and even 90s these sub-committees were formed to address specific issues pertinent to WSSC's work. Later they continued under the banner of "interest groups." Some of the topics that David was closely involved with included Funding, Housing, Mental Health and Social Planning groups. Other items were efforts to establish a Women's Boarding House, a Women's Night Shelter and an inner city creche.

A few groups set themselves specifically defined targets and timelines such as reviewing intended government social legislation or local council plans for the social service sector. When their work was done and their reports to the full WSSC completed they closed down. Other issues were much more long term. Funding, housing and mental health were three such in this category. The nature of the work of these interest groups varied. Some worked on their own account doing their own surveys, research, lobbying, promotion and reporting. Other activities required working closely with City Council and central government officials as part of joint projects and/or reviews. One such project was looking into applying the concept of social planning within new city suburban developments particularly in Miramar and Newlands. The city planner, central government officials, voluntary agencies including the WSSC (or Welcoss) worked together to determine what social services were required in new suburban developments and ensure they were provided for. It was possibly David's good work in this project that saw both himself and fellow WSSC/Welcoss member, Sue Driver "seconded" to the New Zealand Planning Council to undertake some social related research on the funding of voluntary social services in 1986. The NZ Planning Council then fell victim to the Sir Geoffrey Palmer "Great Quango Hunt" in the late 1980s. Then it was the Institute of Policy Studies which rose in its place. With it went David Robinson.

While all this was taking its course, David also chaired many of the regional Social Service Council conferences. These involved not only WSSC representation but also members of like organisations in Lower and Upper Hutt, Wainuiomata, Porirua, Kapiti Coast and Levin. Participation in these varied as the fortunes (and existence) of district organisations waxed and waned in vigour and membership. Now only Welcoss remains active. After the arrival of the David Lange Labour Government in 1984 David led the charge to establish once again a New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS). The concept was put to Labour Minister of Social Welfare, Michael Cullen and NZ Planning Council head, Garry Hawke, at a seminar at Victoria University in 1984. The concept was based on obtaining annual government funding to hold a national conference. But Social Service Councils throughout the country would own and manage the new national body. The proposal got the green light but its impetus in its early years stemmed largely from the WSSC/Welcoss. Happily, the organisation, now more independent, remains active.

David recall the very first NZCOSS as a child of the National Government of the 1960-70s. Under the oversight of Social Welfare Minister, the Hon Bert Walker, NZCOSS was then purely an agent of central government serving as a two way conduit of policy related reports and advice, and to serve as a social policy sounding board for the Government of the day. It was later disbanded.

9.

David was the first Chairman of the new national body. But his tenure lasted just one year. His Board thought his background and knowledge were better suited to a different role as a part time salaried role undertaking low level research.

David remained with NZCOSS through much of the 1990s as the organisation's Policy and Research Adviser as did former WSSC/Welcoss stalwart, Barbara Turner. She filled the role of NZCOSS' Executive Officer over that same period.

These days David's international role with ICNL and also with ANGOA occupies his time. In looking ahead he believes there is a role for Welcoss in whatever local and regional government structure evolves. He would like to see the group return to leading and participating in various social policy review forums as it once did rather than in specific project work. However, he believes that Welcoss should not take on any more than it is capable of at any one time and that its activities should reflect its membership and members' other commitments.

He has been encouraged with the vitality of like organisations in the Auckland area. Groups such as those on the North Shore, Auckland City, Manukau and in the Waitakeres. He also noted the success of the Auckland Community Development Alliance during the Auckland local body amalgamation process. "Maybe, it could serve as a model for Wellington should a similar exercise proceed in Wellington," he believes.

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW WITH JOCELYN-FRANCES O'KANE (WELCOSS CHAIRPERSON 2007-)

When Jocelyn Frances O'Kane assumed the role of Chair of the Wellington People's Centre, in 2003, an automatic requirement to be a part of Welcoss' Executive team came as part of a package deal. Some four years later, in a complete role swap, Jocelyn (finishing in her position as coordinator for the Wellington People's Centre) was elected to the Chair of Welcoss. It was a position she held through to the 2013 Welcoss AGM. At the time of writing the outcomes for the 2013 Welcoss AGM and its attendant Executive Committee elections were still two to three months away.

Jocelyn's active involvement with, and leadership of, Welcoss, therefore, stretched across much of the organisation's post millenium period together with Glen McDonald and Jan Pike. These two also remain key members of the current Executive Committee (2013).

With a background in community work and advocacy, Jocelyn slotted in quickly and easily within the workloads of what was the Wellington People's Resource Centre (subsequently renamed the Wellington People's Centre to be better aligned with a similar Auckland based group). Her fit within a wider, strategic focused, regional oriented umbrella social services support group such as Welcoss, was a little slower in coming. Welcoss was Jocelyn's first involvement within any umbrella related organisation. She said that she found herself somewhat confused and bewildered by its culture and role. Indeed she said it took most of her first year to understand and come to grips with how it functioned.

Jocelyn's work in leading the People's Centre was more straightforward. The Centre's beginnings rose out of the impact of the welfare benefit cuts, changes to workers rights and the slash and burn policies in the Ruthenasia years of the early 1990s. The then People's Resource Centre initially offered self help advice and advocacy on beneficiary and worker rights. Later it also provided a range of medical, dental and complementary health services. For a time both advocacy and health service provision was robust and centred under one roof. In her role as coordinator, Jocelyn also contributed to the governance of the Inner City Project (ICP). The ICP provided an advocacy service which worked alongside people to assist them in accessing mental health services as well as other basic services in order to live well. These needs particularly related to income and housing. The advent of primary health organisations (PHOs) and the need for health providers to be registered with one medical practice together with other structural changes in health provision, began to slowly undermine the ability of the People's Centre to provide primary health services ie one doctor and one nurse. When the medical service began to struggle to provide a service that was financially sustainable it became evident that the one stop self service model could not survive. As well, the Centre was becoming harder and harder to govern effectively. Yet Jocelyn was certain that the model was a good one and may one day again have its time in the sun. She finally left the people's Centre in October 2007. The medical service was eventually lost in 2011 and the dental service closed with the organisation finally folding in 2012. The benefit advocacy role went to Aspire and the Citizens Advice Bureau took up the workers' rights service which it offered in its inner city offices two evenings a week.

11.

With a People's Centre well intentioned management committee struggling to manage the changes and demands of the day, effective and strong governance undertaken by likewise strong minded people was noted by Jocelyn as essential for the survival of struggling voluntary sector groups. Including umbrella organisations. It was this need that she brought to her Welcoss leadership role. Jocelyn followed Welcoss leaders William Holden (who virtually died in office in 2002) and Gaynor Nairn (2003-07). Her assumption of the Welcoss Chairperson's role in 2007 was something that she described as almost taking the position by default. By the 2007 AGM Gaynor Nairn appeared somewhat worn down by the workload and responsibility and there were not a lot of takers for the top job when she declared prior to at the AGM that enough was enough.

Armed with a determination to ensure strong governance as the basis of an effective working entity Jocelyn set to work. In her words she was proud that by its 60th anniversary year in 2012, Welcoss had developed a well functioning executive with respectful, collegial relationships, an open, transparent approach, a clear strategy, good policies and capable staff.

"Connect, inform and support" were the bywords which underpinned all her efforts while in the Welcoss Chair. Her plans included making Welcoss more visible and accessible within Wellington's social services community. This was so it could take up its function as the prime umbrella group to inform, connect with and support the social services and community sector. Some fine tuning was undertaken in the ways of meeting management. In 2009 the monthly meeting process was formally split into three parts: the executive meeting; a wider Welcoss Network forum (from 11 am after shared morning tea); and occasional calls to action and special external presentations in a post noon slot. Wellington City Council annual planning presentations, structural reviews, project progress and political party representations were examples of these. Often project reports related to Wellington City Council led projects that Welcoss was actively involved with. The Social Services Mapping, Homelessness and Affordable Housing projects were some of these. Yet other examples included pulling together a submission on a proposal to charge for police checks. This was in February 2013. Yet another was developing a financial reporting model for voluntary agencies which fitted the requirements of new reporting standards.

Over her reign Jocelyn had believed that Welcoss' had developed an accessible and open approach increased its ability to pick up new initiatives. Particularly from the Wellington City Council. Additionally its partnering approach, again especially with the City Council, made its work more straightforward. And by 2013 Jocelyn said that this had led to increased confidence in Welcoss across the social services sector. The aspect of Welcoss supporting largely City Council initiatives and participating in projects that added real value to its members, the sector and to Wellington City as a whole formed an additional part of Welcoss' business strategy during her Chair. Jocelyn also says that Welcoss' success in this aspect of its role has seen the group called on by the City Council as part of its strategy to build relationships right across the sector. In the Welcoss report back to City Communities in March 2012 the increasing demand on Welcoss time was noted and along with others such as Community Law, Volunteer Wellington and the Multicultural Services Centre, Welcoss was invited to apply to the City Council for increased funding.

12.

This was in order to recognise the contribution Welcoss was making and to ensure that it could continue to do so.

Again during her years in the Chair, Jocelyn described them as nothing less than challenging and often daunting. The work of a number of internal focused project teams ensured that robust communication, planning (strategic and business) and both financial and employment management policies and procedures were well imbedded within the Welcoss management structure. Celebrating Welcoss' 60th anniversary in 2012 also took energy and planning. The quality of the newsletter also advanced under her stewardship. It was not all inward looking however. In recent years, and additional to Wellington City Council led projects to develop regional based homelessness and affordable housing strategies together with the social services mapping project to progress there was also the new social enterprise management model to assess, a casino free Wellington to promote, preparing submission on new legislation governing charities and pokie machine profits, finding alternative funding solutions to gambling profits, giving support to a national living wage movement, the economic downturn from 2009 with resulting increased unemployment, public service cuts and realignment of priorities, increased stigmatisation of beneficiaries, Work & Income's new system of service delivery, and a reduction in central government commitment to social housing were all matters which exercised the will, energy and expertise of the Welcoss Executive.

Of all the above issues, ensuring a casino free Wellington was right up there among Jocelyn's priorities. Indeed it was probably the one which she lobbied the hardest on. While the Wellington City Council's current policy may be not to support a casino being built in Wellington, Jocelyn is adamant a definite proposal could come out of left field at any time. As it was the casino free advocates got a real wake up call in July 2013. Then Sky City revealed that one of its conditions to build a government supported international convention centre in Auckland was a central government okay for a Wellington casino. The condition was dropped during negotiations with the Government. But it could come back to the table at any time.

When Jocelyn took the Chair previous monthly forums had been reduced to quarterly occasions. Even then attendance varied. Meetings were in the Barnardos meeting rooms located on the top floor of the building up a flight of stairs. When a potential Committee member cited the stairs as excluding him pursuing his interest in the organisation further, arrangements were made with the City Council to relocate meetings to one of its committee rooms.

Over her years Jocelyn accepted the need for Welcoss to be an unpopular advocate at times. After all Welcoss was there to be the voice of the little local social service groups in the community. And many were struggling to hold their own amid all the changes and threats they faced. Looking ahead Jocelyn sees an ongoing role for COSSES throughout the country as vitally necessary. Even if the model needs to vary to suit the needs of their communities. In her opinion those that will remain successful will be those which retain the confidence of their local authorities. That is why she is grateful for the current level of confidence being shown in the organisation by the Wellington City Council. It has ensured that Welcoss funding will remain stable for another three years anyway. What happens under any proposed structural change to a "super city" local government concept is anyone's guess. Nevertheless, she does not envisage any lack of a future requirement for a voluntary social service umbrella organisation in the years ahead.

13.

As to whether she will still be leading Welcoss into that environment is a moot point. As at mid July in 2013, and with six successful years in the Chair behind her, Jocelyn saw her future perhaps more within NZCOSS which, at the time of writing, she represented Welcoss on.

Over late 2012 and through 2013 Jocelyn saw the pending local government structural changes as particularly daunting for Welcoss' future. Especially in terms of the organisation being able to continue as effectively as in the past. In her final column for the last newsletter for 2012 she wrote that proposed new local government structure options for the Wellington region did not necessarily bode well for the future existence of Welcoss in the longer term. She also wrote that while Welcoss was fortunate to have the support and confidence of the Wellington City Council and with Council funding assured until June 2015 the landscape was likely to be very different from that point. She stated that while the Wellington City Council currently appreciated the contribution that an umbrella group like Welcoss made, including active participation in Council projects, a bigger local government body may not share that same view.

The previous month the Chair had also pointed to real and ongoing funding cuts to community social sector participants and changes to current charity allocation policies as further hurdles to mount. As such she said that Welcoss' survival depended on the need to work smarter, particularly in bringing central government back to the table again with local government and the sector to facilitate getting the most of any opportunities for community and social support services in future years.

A new "super city" concept is not necessarily like to be a quick fix though. Each of the potential merging councils all operated differently with their own individual structures and their own social issues to manage. As such, Jocelyn saw considerable difficulties ahead if the existing Welcoss structure was to become more regionally focused. The intended and hoped for successful regional roll out of the homelessness and affordable housing strategies might prove a good litmus test of the ability for any regional based governance structure to cooperate in delivering on social support needs. Regardless of what local government structure emerges, Jocelyn is firm in her belief that Welcoss will need to be able to demonstrate its relevance to both the new (or existing) overriding local authority as well as those organisations it represented if it is to survive to fight on. Especially so if its Executive wanted to continue to be supported. Hopefully the work to ensure a more robust and well managed entity undertaken over Jocelyn's years on the Chair stood the organisation in good stead in that regard once the structural changes were in place.

Another major issue for the Chair was a hugely increased workload over more recent years. By 2012 such was the level of demand on her time that Jocelyn had to negotiate reimbursement to her other employer for the additional time spent on Welcoss work. This was work and commitment which could not be set aside. These workloads will be one of the legacies for any successor. So, whenever Jocelyn surrenders the the Welcoss leadership to another, the extent of the Chair's responsibilities, time demands and workloads will need to be considered when accepting nomination.

14.

Whatever the future holds. Whatever the outcome of the regional and local government reviews or whatever the future nature and volume of Welcoss' workload, Jocelyn's by line of *“connect, inform, and support,”* which she held aloft when she first stepped into the Welcoss Chair will remain ever constant. As such they will continue to be one of her legacies (along with the strengthening of the organisation's internal systems, processes and procedures) to those that follow in her footsteps.

FORTY YEARS ON

The Progression To Welcoss' Centenary

A Year By Year History of Welcoss 2013-14 To 2051-52

Or

Year 61 To 100

Foreword

This account of the period from 60 years to the projected 100th celebrations for Welcoss or whatever title (or titles) it bestows upon itself is based on a year by year approach. And as such adds to the consolidated first 60 years history of the organisation completed in 2013 and placed on the Welcoss Website. Adding a chapter at the end of each successive year seems to me an ideal approach in preserving Welcoss' history. If nothing else doing it this way either excludes the need for someone to again pour through available files and records on another 40 years to write the next segment; or at worst it will at least serve to lessen the load.

After completing the consolidated history of Welcoss' first 60 years and some six or so years as a Welcoss volunteer it is unlikely that I will provide more than an additional year or two more to the continuing Welcoss story. But it will be at least start the ball rolling. It is also inevitable that successive accounts over the next 40 years will likely vary in approach and writing style as each new scribe adds his or her input.

For this segment of the Welcoss story each year's text will be largely based on the Chairperson's annual report and material gathered arising from Executive and Network activities over each 12 month period. The structure of the chapters will vary according to the preferences of future scribes. Initially they will follow along the pattern of the 60 year history starting with an overall environmental summary of the major local, national and international impacts to provide the context and setting. A 12 month review of Welcoss activities will then follow. This approach differs a little from that applied to the history of the first 60 years. That was a decade by decade review while the following pages take a year by year approach. As such a decade related summary of Welcoss activities to precede a detailed review becomes irrelevant.

Harry Gibbons
Author of Welcoss' first 60 year history.

2013-14

Setting the Scene:

The international background to 2013-4 proved one of considerable turmoil. A de-escalation in the Afghanistan war and the election of a supposedly more moderate leader of Iran did little to reduce world conflict. The “Arab Spring” which was supposed to herald in a new democratic stability to the Middle East proved a pipe dream. Egypt ousted its democratically elected government and its military led replacement savagely persecuted its followers and supporters. Libya slid into a nation of armed tribal fiefdoms. The boundaries of an initial popular revolt in Syria became blurred and it became difficult to tell just who the good guys were. As well, the unrest in Syria spread into Iraq with some northern regions falling under the umbrella of a jihadist claimed Islamic caliphate with the country threatening to split into separate Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish entities. Eventually a United States led coalition once again launched a military intervention in the Middle East to try to curb the advance of the new Islamic Caliphate. Not long before the 2014 Welcoss annual general meeting, Israel had again launched ground forces against Gaza following an extended period of air attacks. This included a missile strike on a group of children playing on a popular beach. While its military aims appeared to be met it was at the loss of a lot of public credibility around the world.

In Europe the specter of former United States President Ronald Reagan's “*evil empire*” raised its head again when Russia invaded and took control of the Crimea away from the Ukraine within whose boundaries the area was. The former Soviet state of the Ukraine had recently elected a pro-western leadership which offended large numbers of Russian speaking populations in the eastern areas of the country. By the time of the Welcoss 2014 annual general meeting the Ukraine too had slipped into a state of civil war. One tragic outcome was the downing by a missile of a Malaysian Airlines civil airliner with the loss of all on board when it was following what was supposed to be an internationally agreed safe flight path over the country. The loss of the jet was the second major disaster for the airline with an earlier disappearance of one of its aircraft somewhere over the Pacific or Indian Oceans. At the time of the Welcoss AGM no-one was yet any the wiser as to what had happened to it or where it had gone.

On both the national and local scene it was election year. Mayor Celia Wade-Brown was re-elected together with a greater number of “green” candidates as a result of the three year Wellington City voting cycle at the end of 2013. The general elections too followed just a few days after the Welcoss AGM on 20 September. This event gave Welcoss the opportunity to question the major political parties on a range of social justice issues with responses written into the monthly newsletter. Poverty and (in particular the rising incidence of child poverty) and affordable housing took increasing precedence as major social issues both nationally and locally over the year.

In Wellington itself, progress on the construction of the new Buckle Street Memorial Park continued apace. While the State Highway 1 underpass was being constructed as part of that project public debate and a formal and widely publicised independent board of inquiry review continued on the worth and viability of a proposed motorway flyover around the Basin Reserve to the Mount Victoria tunnel. The project formed part of a Government plan for a four lane 110 kilometre expressway between Wellington Airport and Levin. On 22 July the board of inquiry determined that the \$90 million project not proceed.

2.

The board ruled that while traffic congestion around the Basin Reserve needed a resolution the perceived transport benefits failed to outweigh the environmental impacts on a heritage area of the city. The outcome probably put back a roading solution years. It also cast a black cloud over the future of a second Mt Victoria Road tunnel and Wellington Regional Council's rapid transit bus network for the city. Managers of the Basin Reserve also lost the gift of a new multi-million dollar pavillion/grandstand which was to be gifted to the ground to hide the flyover.

Still awaited by the 2014 AGM was the the review report on the future of the region's local government structure(s). Widely anticipated was the outcome of potential proposals for an Auckland style super city with or without Wairarapa but likely to include Wellington, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, and Porirua Cities; and the Kapiti Coast District Council. While no change remained an option it was widely believed and accepted that some form of amalgamation would result. The impact of any change on Welcoss was commented on towards the end of the organisation's first 60 year's history. It is also referenced again in the specific review of Welcoss activities later in this chapter.

Two heavy earthquakes late in 2013 caused considerable cracking in some city structures including a number of car parking buildings with vehicle owners having to wait months before being allowed to extricate them. Red and yellow stickers were posted on a number of city buildings with strengthening work commencing on some while others remained either completely or partially empty as owners contemplated their options (strengthening or demolition).

On the city's sporting scene the rugby Hurricanes and netball Pulse had improved fortunes but were still unable to earn any silverware. The Basin Reserve was, however, the host to a New Zealand sporting first early in 2014. At the time the then New Zealand cricket captain, Brendon McCullum scored the country's first ever triple test century. It was done against a strong Indian test side in front of a packed mid-week crowd who had eagerly followed McCullum's nearly two full days stay at the batting crease to create the milestone. At one point New Zealand was staring down the barrel of an ignominious defeat in less that three of of the five allocated days of the test match. But the New Zealand skipper, with the assistance of lower order centuries from B.J. Watling and Jimmy Neesham, survived to create his milestone. And on the final day was even able to declare the New Zealand innings closed in order to place some pressure back on the visitors.

Big domestic issues such as child poverty, and affordable housing for Kiwi house hunters were sidelined during the run up to the general election by accusations of political shenanigans over alleged illegal hacking; Nicky Hager's latest book about "dirty politics"; a new Internet Party financed by German IT guru and NZ "*resident*," Kim Dotcom; and revelations of possible American CIA listening activity in New Zealand.

In the end the National Party was a clear winner initially winning sufficient MPs to govern alone. However, their numbers were reduced following the counting of special votes. The Maori, United Future and Act Parties' sole representatives joined the national Party to form the Government through to 2017. Social housing and child poverty were flagged early for attention as the first parliament of the new term loomed.

3.

Welcoss in 2013-14 (including relevant references to February-August 2013):

Part 1: The Welcoss Executive in 2013-14:

The 2011-12 Welcoss AGM was undertaken in a deserved self congratulatory atmosphere following a busy and positive year's activities. Included among these was the ongoing involvement and leadership in City Council homelessness and affordable housing policy development and strategy projects. The increasing workload of the Chairperson, Jocelyn Frances O'Kane, had been previously recognised with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to reimburse her employer for additional work time taken on Welcoss' behalf. While issues were not initially anticipated, the arrangement was to eventually cast a dark blanket over Welcoss for much of the next seven months up to the 2013-14 AGM.

Early in 2013 serious questions were raised about how the MOU was being interpreted and applied. As such at the 2013-14 AGM Jocelyn opted not to stand again for either the Chair or the Executive. As well, long serving and hard working Executive member Charmaine Ross of Te Whare Rokiroki (the Maori Women's Refuge) also departed both the Executive and the Network at the 2013-14 AGM as did the Wellington Housing Association of Tenants (WHAT) representative, Ted Mills and long serving Roger Tweedy from Work & Age. Fallout over the division within the Executive had resulted in the resignation of Jude West (Problem Gambling Foundation) several months before the AGM. Although that organisation remained represented at Network meetings. The demise of the information based technology group Wellington ICT had already overseen the loss of Noel Mendoza from the Executive. And the move of Anna Matheson to Auckland from Wellington's Kaibosh had taken yet another. Although her replacement, Matthew Dagger, remained a regular face around the monthly Network meeting table at least up to the 2013-14 AGM. Also soon after her election to the 2013-14 Executive, the Multi-Cultural Service Centre's Carla Danby left the district. The Salvation Army's Hope Centre representative Ollie Semanufagi was another who had made himself unavailable for future Executive work as had Mark Wallis of Just Youth. Youth activities remain represented on the Executive by Sarah Miller (Youthline). But just as Mark had found the time to take a big part in Executive activities difficult so too did Sarah over the 2013-14 year. This was not a new phenomenon. Welcoss historically has found it hard to attract and then retain youth representatives on both its Executive and Network. Youthline had been previously active within Welcoss some years before but had again dropped off the radar.

While much of 2013 was not the only crisis year the organisation had faced in its history there was, nevertheless, a noticeable collapse in enthusiasm and momentum resulting from the fall out between the chairperson and some of the Executive. The group became split and some discussions proceeded on a somewhat personal level and in a more tense atmosphere than normally the case. Although these tensions were screened from much of the wider Welcoss Network.

Despite the cloud a May 2013 Planning Day was proceeded with. Though even this went ahead without the blessing of the chairperson who wanted it cancelled or postponed. Emphasis in planning discussions was on a new structure and approach for the organisation in order to future proof it against far reaching changes looming on the Welcoss horizon.

4.

Foremost among these were likely major local government restructuring across the region together with new government contracting formula. The hard bite of the new government contracting arrangements were quickly felt. First Super Grans and then the Community Accounting Mentoring Service (CAMS) were forced to folding their tents when their major source of funding support dried up, the latter early in 2014.

In respect of new future organisational structures and roles the wider community based models adopted in the Waikato region and Waitakere (together with a similar approach being considered in Rotorua) were looked at during the Planning Day. So too was the social enterprise model initially outlined a year before by Roger Tweedy. But with issues around the chairperson's MOU predominating there was little, if any, follow up to the meeting. At least until the early part of 2014. However, the report back from the planning day was to be resurrected and re-considered following a similar exercise in the early part of 2014.

The 2013-14 AGM had seen the return of the Downtown Community Ministry to the Executive table via its head, the well known and widely respected Stephanie McIntyre. Sara Miller of Youthline was also welcomed to the Executive as was Sharon Howlett who had recently shifted across to Pablos Art Studio from the City Mission, and Charlie Devenish of Volunteer Wellington. One of the most significant outcomes of the 2013-14 AGM, however, was the nomination and confirmation of Major Stephen Scott of the Salvation Army to the Chair. His and the other new faces joined with previous ongoing Executive nominees Mary O'Regan, Merv Ransom, Vicki Hirini, Glen McDonald, Jan Pike and Ann Dalziel. Janette Ritchie who had previously resigned from her co-coordinator role early in 2013 resumed it again alongside Debbie Delaney at the start of the new financial year. Support was continued to be provided by its volunteer, Harry Gibbons who had joined the group in that role some five to six years previously

The Wellington City Council was asked to have one of its officers in attendance at future Executive meetings to ensure an effective two way flow of information. This was deemed particularly relevant in light of the City Council being the group's major funder. The Council had already agreed to Welcoss retaining Council provided project budget but sought greater transparency in regard to its use than before. As well tighter conditions were also placed around quarterly Welcoss Executive meetings with the Mayor. These included agreed, and more specific agendas and providing the mayor's office with copies of the formal meeting minutes.

An early 2014 Planning Day was undertaken at which the discussions of the previous planning exercise were again raised. As well attendees looked at how the remaining project budget could be applied. Attendees considered and recorded current assets and liabilities of Welcoss as:

Assets:

The Welcoss newsletter, an 11 strong Network membership, regular meetings with the mayor, ability to raise issues with the City Council, a website, a good current funding position, and considerable social service sector experience and knowledge.

5.

Liabilities:

A lack of a true multi-cultural representation on the Executive and Network, uncertainty of future funding sustainability, historically being unable to hold on to groups with a youth, disability and multi-cultural focus, uncertainty as to the capacity to meet future funder demands, resources and capacity to develop and manage projects, vulnerability to future major regional and local government structural changes, a lack of a current representation on Welcoss, and an uncertainty around future meeting locations.

This last item resulted from earthquake strengthening work programmed for the City Council offices where the Welcoss Executive and Network had regularly met over preceding years.

With the outcomes of the previous planning day urging a review of Welcoss' role in terms of its future proofing and the identification of the above liabilities in particular together with rumours of a change of title for the NZ Council of Social Services (NZCOSS), a re-branding exercise and a membership drive were agreed as potential new projects. The latter included a need to target previous larger social service providers who had ceased or at best scaled down their involvement over recent years. Progress on these suggestions were put on hold pending returns from a wider Network member survey which was actioned immediately.

One exercise which was proceeded with was the development of a website reference point for organisations seeking supervision and facilitation services. Then, within a short time frame The survey returns indicated a number of high priority issues. These included: alleviating the needs of the homeless; achieving greater volumes of affordable housing; the impact of a low wage economy and in particular on social equity and the increased numbers of families living in poverty; mental health issues; drug and alcohol addiction; funding and resourcing the not for profit sector including how effectively to meet new government contracting requirements for inter service collaboration.

The survey noted feedback underpinning that many community social service providers were operating on a knife edge in respect of being able to survive in their current evolving and constantly moving operational environment.

The Executive then moved to commission Roger Tweedy to undertake a project looking at how Welcoss could best meet the needs of the community's voluntary social services sector. His scope was to also include a re-branding (if deemed appropriate), membership issues, and public advocacy. A first cut review of the constitution had already commenced but it was acknowledged that any changes would need to incorporate the outcome of Roger Tweedy's project.

In addition, a social policy project team was established to consider and prioritise social policy issues for downstream Welcoss advocacy. The project team's title was subsequently changed to the Social Priorities Group to better reflect its role. One of its first decisions was to set a series of questions seeking to various Wellington Central electorate candidates standing in the general election. A second part of the project was to determine whether or not Welcoss project funding should be used to support the gathering of more information and data from Network members.

6.

This would also include evidence based stories to provide a platform from which Welcoss could prioritise and advocate from. As at the 2014 AGM this latter item had yet to be agreed to. The July Executive and Network meetings were combined to allow Roger Tweedy to undertake the first of two workshops. These being based around some of his initial findings and to seek sector feedback prior to his final report going to the Executive on 20 August.

The workshop reached agreement that a broader community based membership base was required to match that of NZCOSS (by now called Community Network Aotearoa) which included a number of community organisations but which were not specifically social service providers. The workshop also recognised that for Welcoss to proceed into the future there as a need to recognise a trend towards younger leadership within organisations. As well additional environmental trends included: increased technology uptake and reliance; a widening use of social media; shorter term planning cycles driven by major operational environment shifts; more ex-public servants seeking jobs within the non-profit sector; a greater ethnic diversity including within leadership roles; the likelihood of major impacts from any major local government restructuring; and a need to compete with major corporates for social service contracts. As such attendees at the first workshop agreed that Welcoss should be more community based than just being representative as an advocate of social justice issues. Though it was also recognised that these should still underpin much of Welcoss' future activities. However, a name change to reflect a broader membership based was also acknowledged as necessary.

One other necessary change was a shift of meeting location to the Downtown Community Ministry. The Welcoss office also underwent a shift into the former St George Hotel. This building is now part back packers and part student hostel but also offered centrally located accommodation.

Part 2: The Welcoss Network in 2013-14:

Over the year a number of new members and several non-members attended meetings to establish new contacts and seek advice and support. Among some of the newer appearances over the year were from representatives of Catholic Social Services, the Wellington High School Community Education Programme (WHSCEP), the Home of Compassion, the Women's Health Collective, and Interpreting NZ among others. As well some Network meetings were attended by individuals. These included a number of social work students who attended a mid 2014 meeting.

Robyn Hambleton from WHSCEP attended the April meeting as a first step towards locating collaborative partners as required by new government contract funding criteria. Like many groups she was struggling to get to grips as to just what was required from this requirement. The Womens' Health Collective representative also expressed similar frustration over the matter at the same meeting. Yet another requirement causing difficulty was a need for provider groups to identify specific outcomes to be achieved. Again there appeared to be a lack of clarification of the requirement on the part of governing officials. Both the collaborative and outcome requirements of the new funding regime were creating stress right around the country as many groups struggled to comply.

7.

The new government contracting regime was the principal topic of a round of Community dialogues which had been held up and down the country starting in 2013. These were undertaken under the auspices of NZCOSS, Volunteering NZ, Social Development Partners, and Community Research. At some dialogues there had been standing room only as provincial and rural groups in particular struggled with meeting new funding criteria. The aims of the new criteria to achieve better value for money and increase collaboration between provider groups was not in contention. It was the how that was proving the sticking point. Even the officials tasked with implementing and overseeing the criteria's application were struggling to clarify questions from providers.

The Wellington Dialogue was held on 11 March 2014 and attracted 28 attendees representing a wide range of community social support agencies. Feedback from attendees indicated: an unawareness by funding authorities as to the degree of collaboration already being achieved in the region; a need for better clarification of outcomes; smaller groups were struggling to comply as they had fewer resources and a limited capacity to do so; some larger groups were finding they were not flexible enough to adjust to the new regime; providers were having to compete with corporates for contracts; and some groups had already folded after losing funding and contracts or being unable to comply.

On the positive side, the Wellington dialogue feedback acknowledged that the new funding regime laid the groundwork for the social enterprise concept to replace former approaches. It was also felt that new providers would step into the breach created by groups who folded while the new regime created the need for providers to work smarter albeit with less and a new climate for provider partnerships was being created.

In the following month a number of Network members expressed their own confusion in trying to comply with the criteria. This was particularly in respect to collaborative and outcome related requirements. However among the biggest Network news of the year came from NZCOSS which in June confirmed a title change to the NZ Community Network Aotearoa (NZCNA). Following the 2013 AGM the Citizen's Advice Bureau announced a new mediation service while the new Youthline representative to the Executive, Sarah Miller, reported issues of cyber bullying as one of the trends which was causing increasing stress among younger people. At the other end of the age spectrum Age Concern's Ann Dalziel informed the Network in June of increased calls from elderly about abuse by their care givers and again later of a trend in power of attorney abuses by family members and a trend of abuse via computer scammers. In June the Problem Gambling Foundation advised that it was seeking to establish an action group within the Network aimed at combatting drug and alcohol abuse more effectively.

The previous year had seen the demise of the Wellington ITC which lost its City Council grant and was unable to continue operating. Its Welcoss Executive representative, Noel Mendoza had been a hard working and valued member of Welcoss and had been very actively involved in the development of the Welcoss website. The group had also established and maintained computer hubs within a number of City Council housing complexes and provided a range of IT training. However, in March 2014, Volunteer Wellington advised that the Community Communications Collective was available to at least assist the local social service sector with any website development requirements.

8.

Launching The New Financial Year: The 2014 AGM:

A good turn out of some 20 or more were on hand at the 39th AGM to hear author and journalist, Max Rushbrooke deliver a presentation on a crisis around inequality in New Zealand. He told his audience that New Zealanders were worse off in terms of financial equality than they were 20 years ago and that to properly address growing rates of poverty in New Zealand then inequality, and in particular a current low wage problem needed to be addressed first.

The new Executive saw the 2013-14 Chairman, Stephen Scott standing down as did Literacy Aotearoa representative, Merv Ransom. The latter organisation remained represented on the Executive, however, by newcomer Bridget Murphy while Mary O'Regan of the Wellington Citizen's Advice Bureau took the Chair to commence the first Executive meeting of the new financial year.

Acting Chairperson over the previous two to three months, Mary O'Regan, provided a post AGM annual report which covered the survey results, mayoral meetings, the posting onto the website of the history of the organisation's first 60 years and the new working groups set up to explore a possible re-branding and to identify social priorities for Welcoss to pursue. The AGM also approved a name change to Community Networks Wellington (CNW) to better reflect an intended widening of the membership base. The AGM also approved fewer but longer Executive meetings and changes to the constitution to reflect both changes.

The first CNW Executive meeting of 2014-15 elected Mary O'Regan (Citizens Advice Bureau Wellington) to the Chair with the remaining members of the Executive being: Jan Pike (Johnsonville Community Centre), Ann Dalziel (Age Concern, Wellington), Glen McDonald (Vincent's Art Workshop), Vicki Hirini (Salvation Army Addiction Services [Gambling]), Sarah Pearce (St Vincent de Paul's Society), Bridget Murphy (Literacy Aotearoa Wellington), Stephanie McIntyre (Downtown Community Ministry), Charlie Devenish (Volunteer Wellington), and Sharon Howlett (Pablos Art Studio). Debbie Delaney and Janette Ritchie remained as the two co-ordinators and Harry Gibbons entered his sixth year in a volunteer support role.